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Calvin and Servetus

CALVIN AND SERVETUS.

Albert Rilliet

CALVIN AND SERVETUS:

THE REFORMER'S SHARE

IN THE

TRIAL OF MICHAEL SERVETUS

HISTORICALLY ASCERTAINED.

FROM THE FRENCH: WITH NOTES AND ADDITIONS.

BY THE

REV. W. K. TWEEDIE.

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PREFACE.

PERHAPS no criminal trial ever gave occasion to such acrimonious censures as that of Michael Servetus. Men of every rank, and every variety of opinion, have long united in condemning the transaction; and perhaps more has been argued or declaimed upon this single topic than upon all the hecatombs of victims offered by the persecuting spirit of Popery.*

Yet, after all, much ignorance still prevails regarding the true history and character of the trial. De la Roche in the beginning of the last century, J. L. de Mosheim and Alwoerden about the middle of it, Sennebier towards its close, M. Fleury in 1835, M. Trechsel of Berne in 1839, M. de Valayre in 1842, as well as many others, have professed to give lives of Servetus, or narratives of his trial. Some of these

* The last of these philippics which we have noticed was pronounced by Lord Brougham. But surely a charge from such a quarter cannot be deemed important, at least as regards consistency. His lordship reckons man not accountable for his belief. Calvin held certain beliefs, and held them honestly, conscientiously, and at all hazards; why, then, assail him for convictions involving no responsibility?

were dictated by avowed hostility to Calvin, or antipathy to the theological opinions which he embraced and advocated, while all of them were imperfect, because the documentary evidence which the authors had before them was not complete. But in the course of 1844, M. A. Rilliet of Geneva published there a brochure upon the subject,* in which he has, with great painstaking and impartiality, concentrated the light of history, made yet more clear by that of documents hitherto unexamined or unpublished. The Registers of the City of Geneva were long supposed to be lost. More recently, however, they have been discovered to be still extant; and Rilliet has availed himself of all that they contain to place the trial of Servetus in its true, that is, its historical, light, divested at once of the exaggerations of ignorance and the bitterness of partisanship.

Without sanctioning every sentiment of Rilliet, it is, perhaps, not too much to say, that the world now knows all that ever can be known concerning the trial of Servetus, till the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid bare. The impartial student of history has now an opportunity of ascertaining, from unquestionable and authentic sources, all the circumstances connected with that humbling event. The archives of Geneva have been ransacked, and their contents analyzed. The letters of contemporaries, printed and in MS., have been examined. The parties

* Its title is, "Relation du Procès Criminel Intenté a Genève, en 1553, contre Michel Servet, redigée d'apres les Documents Originaux, par Albert Rilliet."

which then contended for power in Geneva—its ancient forms of justice—its magistrates and ministers —the very documents employed in the trial, as they were written out while it was in progress—the Reformed Churches of Switzerland, and other bodies, both friendly and hostile to the Reformation, have all been cited by Rilliet to give evidence on this long contested topic; and, with rather a leaning to Servetus, he has brought into a short compass all that can, perhaps, ever be ascertained regarding this memorable trial on this side the judgment-day.

The following pages contain, among other things, a translation of Rilliet's work, most strictly and literally faithful to all the facts which he has brought to light. It at one time appeared that an abstract of his narrative might have sufficed; but that there might be no bias, and no unconscious warping of facts, it has been reckoned best to lay before our readers a translation of the whole of Rilliet's investigations and views. For the first chapter, and the Notes marked Tr., the translator is responsible; and the whole is now submitted to the friends of religion in the hope that an accurate judgment may at last be formed of Calvin's share in this mournful process.

And what was his share?

That he held the opinion that heretics might be punished by the sword is certain. In common with nearly all the men of his generation, the great French Reformer believed that the Word of God was something so fixed and definite, that its meaning might be infal-

libly ascertained, and that to depart from that meaning so as to endanger the souls of men by teaching a lie, was a crime even greater than violating human laws. Looking at the abstract and absolute truth, rather than viewing it in connection with man's varied mind, the Reformers assumed that they possessed the power, first, to discover with certainty the mind of God in Scripture; and, secondly, of checking heresy by imprisonment or death, when argument failed to convince the heretic. Hence the trial of Servetus, and of all who suffered like him at the hands of the Reformers. They reckoned the civil magistrate as much bound to defend the first as the second table of the Decalogue—to vindicate the rights of God against blasphemy, as well as the rights of man against injustice; and this formed the basis of their opinions and practices on the subject.

The following narrative will show that so prevalent or universal were the sentiments just referred to, during the age in which the trial took place, that men of all shades of opinion held them—they held them as first principles not to be questioned, and would have deplored as a neglect what we now lament as a perpetration. Not merely the Church of Rome, which has sometimes made persecution a science, but the Churches of the Reformation, as if one mind animated them all, adopted the principle, and acted on it. Both the magistrates and ministers of Berne were unhesitating and decided in favour of condemning Servetus. The same is true of Zurich, of Schaffhausen, and Bâle. Not merely the firm unbending

Calvin, but the mild and gentle, and too compromising Melancthon, favoured the verdict. The zealous Farel, and the temperate Bullinger, nay, even Servetus himself, sanctioned the maxim, which it would then have been heresy to question. In short, it formed part of the religion of the Reformed States, that heretics deserved to die. Their most sagacious men saw nothing incongruous or unchristian in these opinions. They felt the full value of God's truth, and were inclined to uphold it at every hazard —by their own death, or that of others.

This may not vindicate the transaction whose various stages are now to be described, but it explains it. Men who dislike the French Reformer, because they do not know his character, and others, because the form of truth which he taught offends them, have piled obloquy on Calvin's memory, for his share in this affair—he is thought of by thousands only as the truculent and relentless murderer of Servetus. The narrative now submitted might terminate all such prejudices. It will be seen that what he did was not merely in perfect unison with the spirit of the age in which he lived, but in compliance with the laws of his adopted country. If condemned, therefore, it must be rather because he lived in the sixteenth century, than as causing the death of Servetus; for, we repeat, it was the age, and not Calvin, that occasioned his condemnation. Rilliet has described the whole in one of his antithetic sentences: "Devant nos consciences cet arrêt est odieux; il fut juste devant la loi."

Indeed, so much was this the case, that Geneva was congratulated by more than one Reformer, on the happy privilege which it enjoyed in ridding the world of Servetus. There was an actual rivalry and competition between the Reformed and Popish Churches in the matter, though the Reformer's clemency sought a commutation of the punishment into one less severe than burning.*

Besides, in estimating the moral character of this painful transaction, we are not merely to keep in view the spirit and the principles of the age—we are, moreover, to bear in mind the political influences which helped to hasten the death of Servetus. He sought to connect himself with a party in Geneva who were then struggling for a power that was dangerous to the commonwealth, or subversive of its edicts and laws. They would fain have employed him as an instrument for promoting their own ends, by embroiling the Reformer, who opposed their licentiousness. They were baffled; and Servetus was more or less their political victim. On his trial, he was bold or timid, perhaps we might say he was insolent or humble, according as he supposed his partisans in the State to be successful or discomfited. This developed passions which should never have entered into an inquest so solemn, and explains, though it does not excuse, the mournful termination of the trial, which made Servetus a martyr or a hero in the view of some—an obstinate and unprincipled heretic in the opinion of others.

* Coleridge has somewhere said, that "if any poor fanatic ever thrust himself into the flames, that man was Servetus."

And this is made apparent by the fact, that when Servetus was at last condemned, it was from political rather than religious considerations. Calvin was set aside. He was not consulted. Nay, *contrary to his wishes*, the Reformed Governments were asked to counsel Geneva in the affair. Being thus constituted a jury, their verdict was unanimous; and Geneva would have outraged the whole of Reformed Switzerland, had it ventured to pronounce Servetus innocent, or even found him guilty of only a venial offence, after both the Churches and the States had virtually condemned him. It is, therefore, historically untrue that Calvin was the cause of the unhappy man's death. Had the other Churches not condemned him, Servetus would have been dismissed acquitted.

Would men look dispassionately at these truths, now historically laid before them, all the parties in this melancholy transaction would receive what is their due, whether of censure or of praise; especially would Calvin be freed from the load of infamy under which his memory lies, as if he had been the sole instigator of the trial—the personal enemy, or the heartless persecutor of Servetus. It is because we think that the following narrative is calculated to lead to this result that we invite attention to it—conscious that the impartial inquirer will arrive at the conclusion, that when Calvin had once agreed with his age in holding the opinion that heretics were to be punished by the civil magistrate, all that he did in the trial of Servetus was the natural result of his principle, while it was constitutionally incumbent on him as a minister of

Geneva. He behoved either to repress the threaten ing and subversive heresy or abandon his post.

But this is not the place in which to enter on any details regarding the character of the great French Reformer. He had not advanced so far before his age as to discern the force or application of some principles now held to be axioms; but that is only saying that he lived three hundred years ago, when Europe was but emerging from the bondage and the blindness of Popery. And if he still bore some scars of the yoke —if his noble mind did not all at once embrace the whole range of Christian principle—if his soul, which clung to what it reckoned the truth with the force of passion, was not all at once unfettered—who that knows what man is will marvel?* The more that his character is studied, the more that his ardent affection is known, the more that his devotedness to the simple truth of God is understood, and the more that we learn of that filial affection with which his friends clung to Calvin as their father, the less, in one point of view, will we regard, the more, in another, deplore, the obloquy of the world against him. One of his titles among his friends was a blessed one—he was called Ειρηνοποιητης; and while he has himself confessed that "a certain severe lenity" ever influenced him,

* Dr Whately has explained this matter in a single sentence: "A man of the most humane and benevolent character may be led by a mistaken sense of duty, arising from error of judgment, to sanction the most dreadful severities, which he regards as the only effectual check to a greater evil, such as he thinks himself bound to repress at all events."—*Errors of Romanism*, 3d Edition, p. 254.

devoted attachment to what he reckoned the truth was his predominant characteristic—the cause of his greatness, the occasion of his errors. But his own words to Perrin contain the real elements of his character: "Quis sim," he says, "aut ipse scis, aut scire saltem debes, is, nempe, cui ita corde sit jus cælestis heri, ut ab illo rectâ conscientiâ asserendo nullius mortalis causâ dimovendus sim." This sentence is a key to Calvin's mind.

We only add, that the outline of Calvin's History, contained in the first chapter, is a very meagre sketch or abstract of a life prepared now many years ago. It is well known that "a great and venerable name"—the late Dr M'Crie—contemplated such a work, when he was called away to the world where the good are "for ever with the Lord." The inheritor of his name—the Rev. Thomas M'Crie—is now employed upon the work, and will, no doubt, do justice to one of the greatest of the sons of men. It is not creditable to Scotland, so much indebted to Calvin and Geneva, that we have no native life of the French Reformer worthy of his name. Gratitude combines with admiration to call on us to fill up the blank.

W. K. T.

Edinburgh, *May*, 1846.

CALVIN AND SERVETUS.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF CALVIN.

The sixteenth century of the Christian era, like that in which we live, opened amid commotions which convulsed society to its centre. Causes long in silent operation then hastened to consummate their effects; and a combination of circumstances, unequalled since the days of the apostles, tended to promote the emancipation of mind, and advance the great ends for which the Gospel of Christ was given by God to man. One of the periodic throes to which the world seems destined had come on, and a thousand premonitions told that some mighty events were at hand.

Amid these struggles, in which errors, grown venerable by their long duration, were to be assailed and overthrown, and higher and purer principles developed, there appeared in different quarters of Europe men of mighty minds, gifted by God for their era, and prepared for all that their troubled age called on them

either to endure or to do. Œcolampadius at one place, Bucer at another, Melancthon at another, Farel and Viret at others—Knox in Scotland, Zuingle and Bullinger at Zurich, Haller at Berne, and Luther everywhere, co-operated in restoring the Gospel to sinners, and pouring into their hearts the message brought from heaven to earth by Him whose "words are spirit and life." Men were thus taught that he who was blindly reckoned the "Rector of the Church universal," and impiously styled the "Head of the Republic of God," was but a frail and an erring mortal; that the system over which he presided was a vast mass of corruptions piled above the simple truth as it is in Jesus, to bury it, if possible, in oblivion; and that the real welfare of the nations was identified with the dethroning of the Man of Sin—the abolition of the system which, as the mystery of iniquity, is stamped with the curse of Almighty God.

In forwarding this blessed work, none stood more signally forward, or acted a more conspicuous part, than the French Reformer, Calvin; and we would now lay before our readers a short, and necessarily a superficial, sketch of his eventful life, before entering on the details connected with the trial of Michael Servetus.

John Calvin was born at Noyon in Picardy, on the 10th of July 1509. His parents were Gerard Chauvin, who, among other offices, held those of procurator of the chapter, and procurator-fiscal of the county, of Noyon, and Joanna Franc, who was reckoned one of the most beautiful women of her time.

Though the Reformer, who was the second son, owed little to the influence of birth, his father's activity, and his connection with some families of rank, in some degree facilitated young Calvin's entering upon life with prospects of worldly success. Florimond de Remond gravely says: "The honour of the Pontificate was promised to him at his birth."

We learn from Beza that John had four brothers,* though it is difficult, amid conflicting accounts, to arrive at very accurate information regarding the family of Gerard. He himself died in the Popish communion, but more than one of his sons were happily induced to abjure it. Charles, the eldest, who died before Calvin, was suspected of heresy, refused to receive the sacrament of extreme unction prior to his death, and was, in consequence, ignominiously buried beneath the gibbet of Noyon, as one who had denied the faith! The registers of that city are said to testify that Mary, one of the daughters, also died an heretic—that is, she had listened to the voice of God, and abandoned the corruptions of Rome; and we shall subsequently find that Anthony, the third son, embraced the Reformation, and cast in his lot with his illustrious brother at Geneva.

Gerard Chauvin, whose surname his son afterwards changed into that of Calvin, had some reputation for abilities, and appears to have possessed a moderate competency—the fruits of industry rather than inheritance. He bestowed a liberal education upon his

* Another account says three; another, three brothers and two sisters.

son, whose studies began at the College of Capettes, in Noyon; and about the commencement of his fourteenth year (1523) he was sent to Paris, to enjoy the benefits of the capital, along with the sons of the house of Mommors, then reckoned among the most distinguished in Picardy.

In Paris, Calvin prosecuted his studies first at the College of La Marche, under the direction of Maturin Cordier, the well known Corderius of our Latin schools, a teacher of eminence, and ultimately a friend of the Reformed cause. The youth was subsequently removed to the College of Montagu; and even at this early age, he is said to have read some of the works of Luther, though he continued in the worse than Egyptian bondage of Popery for several years subsequent to that period. He passed rapidly through the different departments of study, ascending from college to college so fast as far to outstrip his fellows; thus early evincing the vigour of his understanding and the remarkable tenacity of his memory.

Gerard Chauvin had destined his son, from his infancy, to the Church, and his decision received a sanction from young Calvin's early habits. Even in boyhood, he displayed that unwavering uprightness which characterized him through life. He himself records that, as a Papist, he was unbending and austere at once in the tenets which he held and the spirit in which he enforced them. Free in his own conduct from the excesses too common in youth, he was a stern accuser of vice in others, and verified to the letter the Italian proverb: The man is a continuation of the

child.* His habits were retiring and reserved, indicating timidity rather than presaging the boldness which afterwards characterized him. Like many deeply meditative minds, the ordinary sports of youth had few attractions for him. Study was his employment, while yet it appeared to be his amusement rather than his task.

Before John Calvin was twelve years of age, his father had interest to procure his appointment as a chaplain in the Cathedral of Noyon. The solemn absurdity of such a nomination was completed by the bishop performing the ceremony of the tonsure on the boy, thus fitting him for the sacred office, and for holding cures without knowing their meaning, far less being able to fill them. In 1527, he obtained the curacy of Marteville, which he exchanged two years thereafter for that of Pont l'Eveque, the native place of his father. He zealously preached to the people of his cure; and though not regularly ordained as a priest, he perhaps performed some of the functions of that office.

While he was thus passing from cure to cure, there is reason to believe that his mind had already begun, at least, to be startled by the truths which were then in rapid circulation; for his was not a soul which could contemplate without interest or emotion the new principles and stirring events of his times. This much is certain, on the authority of Desmay, that,

* Indeed this passed into a proverb among his companions, and he was often taunted with the saying: "John can decline as far as the *accusative*."

in 1526, he was declared contumacious by the Chapter of Noyon, on account of his residence at Paris, and his long delay in returning to his duties. The heavings of the Reformation were then agitating both the capital and the provinces; and there is reason to believe that, even at this early period, Calvin had begun to study with some attention what was not then cordially received, though it ultimately influenced his mind so as to turn it from error and corruption to the truth. The fires of persecution which then blazed in Paris could not but prompt such a mind to think and inquire; and honest inquiry has ever been fatal to the pretensions of Rome.

Meanwhile his original destination, as to the profession which he should follow, was altered. Gerard Chauvin, perceiving that the study of law opened a more promising road to wealth than the Church, resolved that his son should become a lawyer, and not a divine, and Calvin submitted to be "dragged" from his favourite study in obedience to his father's desire. It is worthy of remark, that John Calvin and Michael Servetus, who were subsequently placed in such keen opposition, were each, at the bidding of paternal authority, induced for a time to abandon the study of theology for that of law.

But He who had work for the Reformer in his Church, in providence prevented Calvin's attention from being wholly turned from theology; and his kinsman, Pierre Robert Olivetan, was the instrument employed for that purpose. The Revelation of God was studied by them perhaps even more than the laws

of men, and the result of their united labours was the publication of a French translation of the Scriptures at a period subsequent to that to which we now refer (1535). Calvin furnished the preface, vindicating the propriety of multiplying such publications, and refuting some of the Romanists' favourite dogmas.* He was gradually, and perhaps unconsciously, preparing now for adopting views and a profession in which the messenger of peace too often endured a soldier's hardships and found a soldier's sepulchre.

Calvin continued, however, for some time longer, to prosecute the study of law. At Orleans he heard the lectures of a learned jurisconsult, Pierre l'Etoile;† and it is said that while there he frequently discharged the duties of professor. He was offered an honorary doctorate by an unanimous vote of the Senate; and even the rancorous hatred of Audin‡ against Calvin has been compelled to confess, that at Orleans he was the delight of the professors—assiduous, docile, and full of ardour.§

* D'Israeli (Curios. of Literat.) incorrectly says: "The Olivetan Bible was the first translation published by the Protestants, and there seems no doubt that Calvin was the chief, if not the only translator." We do not quote the prejudiced remarks of D'Israeli regarding Calvin's religious views.

† Peter Stella, president of the Parliament of Paris.

‡ This is the name of one who has written a book entitled *Vie de Calvin*, as a Popish antidote to D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation. The language of truth and soberness applied to that performance would seem severe; yet even this age of scurrilous writing has produced little that is so false as Audin's work. He gives a full account of Gerard Chauvin's descendants.

§ It appears that his studies in law had already made him well known. So early as 1530, when Calvin was only twenty-one years

But sacred literature began at length more and more to engross the mind of Calvin; and though he did not yet abandon the study of law, he pursued it with growing indifference. At the same time, he was gradually becoming the centre of attraction to many who had begun earnestly to desire for the knowledge of purer doctrines than those which had for ages prevailed; and though he ever courted retirement, it soon became apparent that he was one of those who could not be concealed—he belonged to an order of men on whom others instinctively lean, because their wisdom and their strength render them guides adapted to great emergencies and stirring times. His places of retirement, he says, "were like public schools;" and this we may readily believe concerning one who was pronounced the most learned man in Europe when only in his twenty-second year. It was evident that He who holds in his hands the hearts of all men, was now leading Calvin by ways that he did not know, and training him for the conspicuous sphere which he occupied among the illustrious men, and in the blessed emancipation, of the sixteenth century. Like Joseph, "the Lord was with him, and he was a prosperous man." God is in biography as well as in history, and we behold his finger here.

And it is not easy for us to estimate the struggle

of age, he wrote a letter on the divorce of Henry VIII. He held that the marriage was illegal, as within the degree allowed by Scripture; and therefore gave his opinion in favour of the divorce. His letter is referred to by Collier, Eccles. Hist., vol. ii. p. 55. Burnet, Hist. Reform., vol. i. p. 170 (edit. 1816). It may be seen in *Epistolæ Calvini*, third edit. 1597, p. 384.

that it must have cost a mind like Calvin's to abandon his ancestral delusions. He acknowledges that his mind had been so far debased by Popery, that he reverentially kissed the rotten relics of creatures called saints; and when we have witnessed the spell-like power which Popery exercises over the consciences of the timid—nay, how it often quells the boldest of men into submission—one can, in some measure, enter into the recoil and revulsion produced by the prospect of forsaking all that had been held sacred and venerable, or calculated to open the way to honour and distinction. The system which taught a priest to trample on the neck of emperors, and vindicate the deed as *religious*, must have possessed a power truly satanic in blinding and deadening the consciences of its devotees. Calvin was for years one of the most zealous and abject of them all; but the disenthralling effects of Luther's struggles were beginning to be felt throughout Europe. The Confession of Augsburg, published in 1530; the Treaty of Smalcald, in 1531; and that of Nurimberg, in 1532, all sped onward these effects; and mind after mind was awakening from its lethargy. Authority, apostolicity, infallibility, and other figments might be quoted against this progressive movement; but it was a feeble attempt to arrest a flowing tide. The antagonism had begun. Truth and error were in conflict; and Omnipotence alone could control the issues.

The University of Bourges was at this period celebrated as a school of law, and thither Calvin proceeded to study under a distinguished lawyer, Alciati,* who

* He was born at Milan in 1492.

had been invited to that city from Italy by Francis I. Calvin is said to have listened to Alciati with a kind of "angelic ecstasy," and profited at once in theology and law, owing to the eminence of his professor in both departments. At the same time, he laid the foundation of some friendships which tended to mitigate the sorrows of his troubled life. Melchior Wolmar then taught Greek at Bourges, and that learned man formed a strong attachment to Calvin, his pupil, for which he accounted by saying that he combined the industry of a German with the vivacity of a Frenchman; but the strongest tie, no doubt, was occasioned by Wolmar's expressed conviction that Calvin would eventually prove an intrepid assertor of the Reformed doctrines, to which the professor was thus early attached.

The inward struggle was all the while advancing in Calvin's mind without any publicity, but with a direct bearing on the final issue. The flesh was striving against the Spirit; and he has himself, in his own vigorous style, described his condition when the set time came for abandoning Popery and embracing the truth. It was in one of his evening walks with Wolmar in the neighbourhood of Bourges that he finally resolved to concentrate his attention on theology, and that formed, in effect, the turning point of his history; it solved the question, whether Calvin's powers were to be expended upon the subtleties of law, or allowed to aim at the noblest object placed within the grasp of man—the disenthralling of mind, and the winning of souls to Christ. To render the resolution instantly a practical measure, he appears

to have occasionally preached in that vicinity, especially at Lignieres, where the people acknowledged, what we can easily believe, that he preached better than the monks. But the unexpected illness and death of his father recalled him, for a little, from Bourges to Noyon. His native city had showed symptoms of a desire to adopt the Reformed doctrines; for images had been destroyed and crosses thrown down; and these and other events tended, perhaps, to expedite or confirm the change that was coming over Calvin; at least he now made arrangements for *selling his benefices*, and it appears, from the records of the city, that the sale took place in 1531. It is supposed that at this visit, Calvin communicated to his two brothers and his sister the views which he held regarding religion; after which he removed to Paris, where he published his maiden work—a Commentary on Seneca's Treatise, *De Clementia*. It may appear strange, that one described as harsh, unfeeling, and truculent, like Calvin, should have commenced his public life by such a production; but we apprehend that this early choice really furnishes a key to the heart or the true character of the Reformer. Benevolence or affection was unquestionably its groundwork, and even the errors which he committed were only misapplications of that principle. The work referred to has procured for Calvin the praise of men of all parties, at least for precocious power, as it occupies the neutral territory on which prejudice and partisanship are not likely to encroach. His chief object in its publication was, if possible, to draw the attention of Francis I. to

the atrocity of those martyrdoms which were then so rife in Paris; but what could a treatise by a heathen avail against the heart of the fierce though accomplished monarch of France, animated by a spirit of chivalry for Rome?

A brief sojourn at Paris in the year 1532 made Calvin acquainted with some of the adherents of Lutheranism. His mind had been gradually approximating to theirs; and he was now placed under an influence that matured and consolidated his belief. In terms of his previous resolution, he now finally discontinued the study of law; and though he still endeavoured to shun publicity, his views were now turned to the revival of religion among his countrymen. His mind had slowly undergone that mighty revolution which amounts to a new creation—a transition from death to life; and he has himself enabled us to contemplate the transition thus made by his soul. He was led formally to renounce Popery and all its corruptions, and thus describes the process.

As he had been taught from his youth, Calvin had professed the Christian faith, if the corruptions of Rome have any title to the name, but had no heartfelt or intelligent conviction of its importance. He believed that the knowledge of heaven was intrusted to priests, who were to be consulted as its oracles; but all his attainments never had enabled him, as he confesses, to worship God in truth, nor cherish solid hope, nor discharge aright the duties of the Christian life. He endeavoured to serve God, but failed in every attempt—he believed that he was redeemed, but knew

not how redemption should influence his life — he knew there would be a resurrection, but he shuddered at the thought—he concluded that mercy would be extended to none but the deserving—he wished, like all men by nature, to supersede the Redeemer's righteousness—he thought that God could be satisfied by masses and confessions—supplications, sacrifices, and penance were employed to appease Him—he implored the saints to intercede; but, after all, he was forced to confess that he felt no peace of mind—he spent his strength for nought, and only "laboured in the fire." Whether he contemplated his own or Jehovah's character, he was wretched, and a terror took possession of him which, he says, no expiations could quell. The more strict his self-scrutiny, the more loud was his conscience in condemning. Looking back on his youth, and seeing there only ungodliness—feeling that he had sought to extinguish the light which Jehovah sheds down, and withhold the homage which Jehovah demands, his mind was overwhelmed; and it was then that he learned that deep spiritual exercise which he afterwards taught to thousands. Amid this training he courted oblivion, but it would not come; and when every alternative had failed, he resolved, in a true self-righteous spirit, just to continue doing and endeavouring, in the expectation that this doing and endeavouring would at last succeed!

When truth at length began to dawn on him, it was with difficulty that the proud Calvin would regard it—nay, he eagerly strove to repel it.* He

* Initio, fateor, strenue, animose resistebam.—*Calvin.*

had now begun to struggle with a law which would neither lower its demands nor submit to be compromised, and felt that anguish which has sometimes struck self-righteous man dumb in motionless despair.* His reverence for the Church was his stumbling-block; but the blessing of the converting Spirit removed it, and Christ became his all—from that day his maxim ever was: "None but Christ"—"God forbid that I should glory, save in his cross." At Paris, Calvin first became acquainted with Farel. They met in the house of Stephen de la Foye, a convert and martyr to the truth; and there the good word of the kingdom was deposited in more hearts than Calvin's. Once emancipated from the arch-delusions—the Pope's infallibility, and the power of the hierarchy to damn—the rest of the Popish corruptions soon melted away—they were like snow before the sunshine of summer, when the Sun of Righteousness arose. Calvin now saw the degradation into which he had sunk; and deploring in groans and tears his obstinate aberrations, he turned from them to God in Christ, according to the Gospel—a Papist no longer, but a Christian—a man of God, furnished unto many good works.

From that day, thoughts which had their origin and their end in heaven became familiar to his soul. He had experienced the essential connection between sin and misery—he was now to know the indissoluble

* Toutes fois, et quantes que je descendoy en moy, ou que j'eslevoy le cœur à Toi, une si extrème horreur me surprenoit, &c.—*Calvin.*

alliance which God has created between holiness and peace, and to understand that, though the laws of the moral world be less palpable than those of the material, they are neither less binding nor less inevitable. From his conversion, in short, Calvin moved upward like a culminating star; and had his eye been less stedfastly fixed on heaven, the world would not have waged such a controversy against his memory and name.*

We cannot, in this glance at his history, dwell in detail on the various incidents which befell Calvin at this period. He now began to stand forth as a defender of the Lutheran cause, as the Reformation was then designated, and to vindicate the rights of its friends. But he soon became an object of suspicion to the Parliament of Paris; his apartments were, in consequence, searched, and Calvin was obliged to flee in disguise from the city. Though Margaret of Navarre endeavoured to shelter him along with other Reformers, he was not safe from the hot persecution that raged, and therefore retired to Saintonge; and while he preached the Gospel there whenever opportunity offered, he *circulated tracts*, prepared by himself, in the hope of alluring the people to think. By his lessons and efforts, Audin confesses, many were induced to abandon Popery and embrace the truth.† It has been said that the Reformation in France began when the voice of Calvin was heard; at all events, his disciples,

* He who would form a right opinion of Calvin's Conversion should consult his *Responsio ad Sadoletum*, in which the Reformer describes the change.

† Audin, i. p. 68.

about this period, begin to be recognised as a separate body from the Lutherans.

When the persecution had a little abated, Calvin returned to Paris; and it was about this period (1533–1534) that he had some interviews with Michael Servetus on the subject of his erroneous opinions. Arrangements were made for a conference regarding them; but the Spaniard did not appear, and we shall afterwards find Calvin referring to this affair.

His labours at this period were brought to bear on various parts of France; and many converts of note adopted his opinions. But the Lutherans, in great numbers, were now remorselessly consumed in the flames at Paris, sometimes even to the extent of six in a single day; and when Calvin saw these funeral fires so frequently blazing, he resolved to abandon France, and seek an asylum in some of those countries where the truth was less intensely hated.* He selected Bâle as the place of his retreat; and in proceeding thither was robbed by his servant on the way. At Strasburg, Calvin borrowed money to help him on his journey; and for some time after his arrival at his adopted home, we find him co-operating with some of the leading minds of his age in advancing the cause of truth.

* Previous to his departure, he published at Orleans a treatise against a sect which had sprung out of the Reformation, holding the opinion that the soul sleeps from death to the judgment. It was first published in 1534, under the title of *Psychopannuchia*. No doubt can remain in the mind of any who have read the treatise, that Calvin, when he wrote it, had, with all his heart, abjured the heresy of Rome.

It was at Bâle, in the year 1535 or 1536, that Calvin published the first edition of his Institutions of the Christian Religion. This is not the place to enter into any curious investigation regarding the time, the place, and the title under which that remarkable work first saw the light;* but it at once placed its author in the first rank of the master spirits of that age of mighty men. While labouring at the task, he is said to have passed whole nights without sleep, and days without food. He had but recently emerged from the fearful pit of Popery; and yet so wondrous were his powers and his progress, that in this magnificent production of consecrated intellect he has drawn out all the truths of revelation in a perfect system, so that it were difficult to say what portion of the Christian scheme is overlooked or even displaced. It is said† that fragments of the Institutes had been circulated at the court of Margaret of Navarre, while the author was preparing it; and if that statement be correct, he had begun his labour almost as soon as he embraced the Reformation. But, waving all details, we can only remark, that whether we regard the noble dedication to Francis I., enough of itself to render its author illustrious—or the comprehensive power of combination which the work evinces—or the amazing acuteness and grasp of the author's mind—or the classic vigour and elegance of his style—or the learning with which his views are supported—or the thorough understanding

* The curious reader will find the matter largely considered by Clement in his *Biblioth. Curieuse*, Art. *Calvin.*

† Audin, i. 123.

of the Christian system which it displays—or the high degree of holiness manifestly attained by the author —it is equally surprising as a production. We cease to wonder that it instantly became the means of settling the religious opinions of tens of thousands— that it was employed as the theological class-book of many lands, and that after all the additional lights derived from criticism and the study of Scripture during the three hundred years which have rolled away since it was published, Calvin's Institutes still form a standard on which men fall back wherever an earnest belief and an intelligent Christianity sway the heart and life.* Pure religion had then become almost the sole possession of a kind of Pariah caste, whose opinions led to the same results as the skins of wild beasts with which the early Christians were covered, in the gardens of Nero — they occasioned their torture and death; and Calvin strove to show that religion, as the Reformers held it, however hated by men, was noble, and ennobling, because it was divine. Even the prejudice of Popery has been compelled to do homage to the work. Audin compares the author to the war-horse of Job, rushing into battle, and says that Seneca gave fluency, Tacitus point, and Virgil poetic honey, to the Institutes of Calvin. The book, however, in the absence of its author, was con-

* One design of the work was to disabuse the minds of men as to the Reformed doctrines, and, if possible, allay the storm of persecution which was raging so fiercely. Francis I. at one time evinced some misgivings on the subject; and hence Calvin's endeavour to deepen the monarch's convictions, and reclaim him to reason and mercy.

demned by the Parliament of Paris to be reduced to ashes, as containing "damnable, pernicious, and heretical doctrine." The Inquisition re-echoed the condemnation. The Koran and the Talmud of heresy were names by which it became known. In short, it instantly became the rallying point or standard of the Reformed Churches—a hissing and a byword to the Papists.*

Soon after the publication of this work, Calvin went into Italy, on a visit to Renèe, the Duchess of Ferara, at whose court some of the Reformed then found a patroness and an asylum.† But the intolerance of the decaying superstition followed him thither, and he was soon obliged to flee from that city where Ariosto was treated like a menial, and Tasso harshly immured as a common maniac. He preached the Gospel, however, at various places along his route; among others at Aoste in Piedmont; and though this episode in his history be surrounded, according to Muratori, with "a festoon of dreams," there is no reason to doubt, on the one hand, that Calvin was persecuted at Ferara by the Inquisition; and on the other, that he preached the Gospel with success in different parts of Italy. How melancholy the fact, that the fetters of spiritual oppression were then rivetted over all that lovely land, and still continue to chafe and to gall it, in spite of these providential attempts to break them!

* The edition printed at Lausanne 1559, contains some interesting information as to the zeal with which the work was first studied.

† The history of this princess is one of the most affecting of that eventful age, and offers an interesting subject for a memoir.

Calvin once more proceeded to Noyon, finally to arrange his patrimonial affairs. While there, it is said that some even of the priests were won by him to the truth. Wherever he went, he became a centre at once of attraction and of influence; and instead of that despotism of mind which ignorance or prejudice has ascribed to him, his whole history shows that wherever men loved the truth, Calvin was also beloved. He possessed the charm-like power of knitting such men to himself in bonds of closest amity. But he soon quitted Noyon, and hastened to seek some retirement where he might do good unmolested; and Strasburg or Bâle was again selected for that purpose. He had now for ever abandoned the heresy of Rome. His was not a mind to concede infallibility to a man, or Godhead to a wafer of flour and water.* Whatever troubles might assail him in defending the truth, he now received and quenched them all on the shield of faith, while he was supported amid the conflict by that grace of which he had become the advocate and martyr. Niebuhr has remarked, that he who recalls into being what had vanished from existence, enjoys a blessedness like that of creating; and such blessedness was largely enjoyed by Calvin. "Moriemur," he said to Charles V., "sed in morte quoque victores erimus; non modo quod inde certus ad meliorem vitam transitus erit, sed quia sanguinem nostrum ad propa-

* Our feelings are a mixture of horror and loathing, when we read that a monkey was once burned alive at Paris, by decree of the Parliament, because it had eaten *the good god*.—*Simond's Switzerland*, vol. ii. p. 301.

gandam illam quae nunc respuitur, Dei veritatem, seminis instar futurum esse scimus."

In seeking a place of retreat, Calvin passed through Geneva, where he designed to sojourn only for a night. When he arrived there, in the month of August or September, in the year 1536, the Reformed doctrines had been for some time adopted, and declared the religion of the State. William Farel, a native of Gap, in Dauphiné, and Peter Viret of Orbe, were the instruments employed by Him who ruleth over all, in forwarding that work. The former has been compared to Cromwell, or to Knox, for boldness and decision, and possessed the trumpet-voice of a fearless orator; the latter was mild and persuasive—his words were falling dew; and, under their combined influence, the one uprooting, the other planting, the truth was established on the ruins of Popery in the city of Geneva. We shall hereafter find that a combination of circumstances favoured this transition. The love of civil liberty, for which the Genevese had long contended, and many of them died —the oppressions of the Duke of Savoy on the one hand, and of their bishop on the other, who, as their lord paramount, combined in his person the civil and spiritual power—the example of Berne and Germany —their disgust at the mummery and gross immorality of their priests—their aversion to certain of the Popish rites, for example, auricular confession; in one word, the Reformation tended to stimulate the minds of the Genevese in the direction of a change. They fell in with the current of their age, and were borne along

by it to the possession of liberty, civil and religious, however unprepared they might be for the full enjoyment of the blessing.

The Reformation in Geneva was thus begun about the year 1532, in the train of various political commotions, which had prevailed for many years before. The people had long been exasperated and harassed by their rulers, and gladly hailed the prospect of emancipation. Reformers were invited to hold public discussions with the priests; and there, as elsewhere, the former were victorious. On the 10th of August, Farel preached before the Council; on the 27th, mass was abolished; and on the 30th, the nuns of St Clair left the city, the monks of various orders having been previously cashiered. The monuments of Popish supremacy were now swept away, and the Reformed religion became the creed of Geneva. The images formerly worshipped were thrown into bonfires, and even the figures on the stained glass of their windows were not spared. The sacrament of the Lord's supper was dispensed in the scriptural form. Baptism was also freed from Popish superstition, and reduced to scriptural simplicity so early as the year 1533.* The preaching of the Gospel immediately supplanted the senseless services of Popery; and though it was too true, amid all this, that Christ came not to send peace on earth, but a sword, it was equally certain that these commotions tended, under an overruling providence, to promote the best interests of men.

Calvin arrived in the city at a time when the ascen-

* Different dates are assigned for some of these incidents.

dency of a mind like his was needed to preside over the interests of truth, or assuage the troubles that prevailed. Farel urged him to make Geneva his home. Calvin declined. But the man who had, with his own hand, torn down the crucifixes and idols which hid the true God from the soul, was not to be disappointed; and he denounced the vengeance of Heaven against Calvin, unless he gave himself to the work of helping to establish the truth at Geneva. The startling adjuration of Farel induced Calvin to change his purpose: "I denounce you in the name of Almighty God, and declare, that if you pretend the love of study in such a case, you are seeking your own things, and not the things of Christ, unless you become our fellow-labourer in this cause," were the words of the ardent and impetuous Reformer. "I felt as if God had laid a violent hand on me from heaven," said Calvin; and in that spirit entered on his duties in that little city, from which he was destined to guide the minds of tens of thousands throughout the world.

But it was with many misgivings that Calvin thus took up his residence at Geneva. The city was still only in a state of transition. Anarchy had long prevailed, and had by no means subsided. The religious friends of the Reformation were not a majority. Calvin trembled at the thought of what he feared was before him; and scarcely had four months elapsed ere his forebodings were verified — he was embroiled and harassed by the contentions of the opposing factions. Plot followed plot in the distracted city, at the instigation of enemies without and within; and the misery

of one who is described by himself as "by nature timid, yielding, and retiring," amid such scenes, may easily be understood. He was stationed, however, on a spot where his powers were developed to the full; and it were difficult to say how much of Calvin's greatness may be ascribed to the fact that he was placed in a sphere which formed the thoroughfare between several nations — in a "microscopic city," the capital of a territory which can scarcely be discerned in the map of Europe, yet destined to become, under his presiding influence, in one sense, more powerful than the mightiest of its empires. Through the instrumentality of Calvin, and the blessing of God on his labours, Geneva became to Christendom what Rome once was, or what Jerusalem may yet become, to the world. The boast of Augustus as to Rome was true of Calvin and his adopted home. He found it built of bricks, and left it reared of marble.

But scarcely was he stationed there, when men, accustomed to the licentiousness which Popery fostered, began to resent the restraints which religion enforced, or murmur at the purity which the Reformed ministers inculcated. The general cause had been strengthened by a treaty with Berne (1536), and the people and magistrates of Geneva had taken an oath, on the 20th of July 1537, to defend the doctrines which they had espoused; but, after all, unprincipled men continued to foment the discord, which was favourable to their purposes. Heresy, as in the case of Peter Caroli, began to appear; and this, together with the feuds which still raged in Geneva, aggravated by

new causes of commotion occurring from day to day, at last drove Calvin from the city. The turbulent agitators carried certain of their measures subversive of the truths of the established religion; and, to consummate their victory over all that was pure and peaceable, Calvin and Farel were, on the 23d of April 1538, ordered to quit Geneva within three days. The decree of exile was confirmed on the 26th of May.

" Had I served man, this would have been a poor reward; but it is well that I have served Him who never neglects to perform what he has promised," was the reflection of Calvin when his banishment was decreed. He and Farel were now insulted with the lowest ribaldry; and the faction who had succeeded in procuring their banishment did not rest till all who avowed the tenets which Calvin taught — among others, Maturin Cordier—were banished along with him. If the Genevese did not again embrace their former superstition, they relapsed into their former vices—so revolting, that even the narrative would be polluting. Sorrow for that misguided people, and fear lest he had given needless offence, now harassed the mind of Calvin, and he withdrew in deep dejection, first to Zurich or to Bâle, and ultimately settled at Strasburg, there to enjoy the company of congenial spirits like Bucer, who prevailed on him to sojourn in that city, by threatening him with the doom of Jonah if he declined. Frequent attempts to effect his restoration to Geneva were made, but the hostility of his enemies was aroused afresh as often as such applications were pressed by his friends. He was

hated, not loved, for his work's sake; and, like our own Welsh, was ever followed by the prophet's shadow —the enmity of the ungodly.

At Strasburg Calvin addressed himself with characteristic zeal to the defence of truth, and as his principles were so absolute or ultimate as to admit of no compromise, he was now compelled to resist some attempts made by some good but weak men to reunite the Papists and the Reformed. At the same time, he was chosen a lecturer in theology in the city—a new church was founded by Calvin—his lectures attracted crowds of students from France and Germany — in short, here, as at Geneva, his labours were incessant and widely influential. After teaching theology by day, he preached every evening, and sought in every way to advance the cause which he had so cordially espoused. Nor did he forget Geneva. Tempted by the ex-bishop to return to Popery, and still distracted by intestine divisions, the Genevese continued like the troubled sea; and though Calvin could not assuage them, he strove, by his letters, at least to throw oil upon the agitated waters. Cardinal Sadolet, the friend of Ariosto, and secretary of Leo X., a man of eloquence, and, for his age, enlightened, at this period addressed the Genevese, in the hope of reclaiming them to Rome; but Calvin threw his shield over his ungrateful friends, repelled the cardinal's appeals, refuted his subtleties, and rendered the attempt abortive.

After Calvin had been driven from Geneva, murder followed murder, and banishment succeeded banishment, in such rapid succession, that the city was

oftener than once on the eve of being lost to the cause of the Reformation. The Reformer did what he could to mitigate these evils; but faction raged so fiercely against faction, that all hope of peace, for the time, had perished. Meanwhile, a convention of those friendly to the Reformed cause was held at Frankfort, whither Calvin resorted (1539), and where he met the most conspicuous actors in those stirring times—Melancthon, the Landgrave of Hesse, and others. He there endeavoured to promote that union among Protestants which ever after continued a favourite object with him; but like many such attempts, the results were neither lasting nor wide-spread. His anxiety for union among the Reformed was as intense as his aversion to union with Papists was determined; but the violence of some, and the latitudinarian views of others, thwarted his endeavours. About this period, the Reformer married Idelette de Bure, the widow of John Storder of Liege, whom he had been the means of rescuing from the fanaticism of the Anabaptists. Marriage had now become one of the badges that distinguished Reformed ministers from Popish priests. Secession from the Romish ranks was scarcely reckoned complete till matrimony had consummated the disruption, and Calvin added the weight of his example to that of Luther, in favour of the scriptural ordinance.

Towards the close of the year 1540, Calvin resorted to Worms and Ratisbon, to be present at the conference held there regarding religion, and was afterwards at Haguenau on a similar errand; but politics, rather than Christian principle, presided over the con-

duct of many, and our Reformer retired disgusted by the vague generalities of Melancthon and Bucer, on the one hand—the violence of the Pope's nuncio, and the tyranny of Charles V., on the other. He declared that he would rather be buried under the ruins of the church of which he was a minister, than be reconciled, as some proposed, to Rome; and seeing that men sought to varnish over, not to eradicate her errors, he boldly declined being a party to such measures. Blandishments and caresses were employed to captivate or soothe him; but he resisted them all. His religion came from the Bible, and admitted of no compromise. He rejected every proposal having that for its object; and, like Athanasius, would have stood alone against the world, rather than surrender one jot of the truth. "We have need of bold minds," he wrote to Farel, "to embolden others;" and he strove to supply what was needed.* In studying his history, we are struck with the number of controversies in which he was engaged. The explanation is, that he could neither himself compromise one principle of God's Word, nor silently suffer others to dishonour that record of truth.

While the diet of the empire just referred to was held, the state of Geneva had become so critical, that nothing seemed likely to save it from ruin but the recall of Calvin. Death, in some cases by violence,

* At Worms Calvin wrote a poem in Latin—his only production of that class. It is a triumphal ode, and its title *Epinikion*. It relates to the downfal of Rome, and is characterized by much of Calvin's energy of thought.

had thinned the ranks of his adversaries. Calamity had softened others. A messenger was despatched to solicit him to return, and the influence of the senates of Bâle, Berne, and Zurich was brought to bear on the magistrates of Strasburg to favour the proposal. The Council of Two Hundred, the court of last appeal in Geneva, was convened, and unanimously agreed to press his recall. On the following day, a meeting of the people—the source of all power in that city—was held. They solicited him also; and though the magistrates of Strasburg for a time hesitated or refused to grant their consent, it was ultimately arranged that he who alone could check the turbulence of Geneva should again be stationed there. He long declined to comply with the requisition; but on the 20th of October 1540, an embassy was sent to Strasburg, which terminated all the negotiations, and reconducted the Reformer, in a kind of triumph, to Geneva. He was determined that his recall should be the restoration of truth to its due ascendency—not a tribute to any individual; and when the hand of Providence was too plain to be longer overlooked, he yielded a tardy assent. Sorrow, anxiety, and tears, he takes God to witness, were occasioned by this step; but Calvin thought that he had the pillar of cloud and of fire before him, and he resolved to follow it, trusting to the God that has ever so marvellously defended his Church.

His return was hailed with acclamations of joy by many of the Genevese;* and though he still had many

* His stipend was fixed at "500 florins *per annum*, twelve mea-

gloomy forebodings regarding the future, he proceeded to draw up a code of edicts or laws for the guidance of the little republic. At a subsequent period we shall find how these laws were violated; but they were passed with the sanction, and stamped with the authority, of the State. The civil power had its functions defined, and the spiritual had its province duly marked out; and, with religion presiding, Geneva might have presented a fair specimen of the good results of the co-operation of the two. In adopting his measures, Calvin was not satisfied with a superficial reform. He aimed at the extirpation of vice. He wished religion and virtue to be paramount. He declared that the Roman Pontiff, and other tyrants, were not so much to be dreaded as the lives of men who brought ignominy, by their ungodliness, on the cause of the Reformation. His master-aim, therefore, was to make pure and undefiled religion supreme in the State and in the family, as well as in the individual soul. Whatever we may think of the mode or the form, these were the principles and tendencies of his legislation.

Measures the most stringent were thus adopted to check the prevailing immorality. All was prohibited that could, by remotest implication, jar with purity of heart, speech, or behaviour; and had the laws of Geneva been such as could be enforced by human

sures of corn, two tuns of wine, and a house." The registers of the city, under date 4th October 1541, contain an entry to the following effect: "Great wages granted to M. Calvin, in consideration of his great learning, and because travellers are such a charge to him."

authority, Calvin's efforts to complete the reform of Geneva would have supplied the first instance of a perfectly Christian republic which the world ever saw —a religious Atalantis—a city of the blessed. But the bow was overstrained, and it broke. Legislation was extended to men's dress, and food, and private habits—spheres in which the religion of the heart, and not the enactments of men, alone can operate. Yet the wise Hooker has said: "This device I see not how the best then living could have bettered, if we consider duly what the existent state of the Genevese did then require;" and this is the best explanation and the only apology for Calvin's rigid edicts. But human laws are applicable only to external conduct; they can take no cognizance of the hidden man of the heart. Transgression, as seen by God, is not noticed by man until it appears in an overt and embodied form, inflicting damage on civil society. In short, as man cannot judge the heart, *his* legislation cannot directly affect its principles and motives.

Calvin's mind, however, was transcendental in its views of *God's* law. He had admitted it to the sovereignty of his own soul; and in legislating for Geneva, he tried to prescribe rules even for the souls of others. He felt that the almighty Being who had appointed a physical law to regulate the beatings of the heart, had also appointed a moral law, not less certain or fixed, to regulate its motives. Starting with this thought, he strove to order all at Geneva according to the revealed mind of God. Wherever this system was wrong, it was by excess, and not by defect; and we

need scarcely scruple to say, that legislation like that of which Calvin was the author, with all the rigorism imputed to it, was more in harmony with the Word of God—his mind—than the godless enactments of more modern times. The French Reformer's maxim was, that the Bible is in everything supreme. To question that, was in his mind infidelity; and that conviction is the basis, or the starting-point, of his laws. Jesus applied the law of God, with all its force, directly to the conscience and the soul. The Reformer, sitting at the feet of Jesus, took his Word to guide him, and tried to do the same. Erroneous opinions and principles were consequently proscribed, as well as flagitious actions; though in carrying out this object as it did, the State perhaps attempted what only God can achieve with wayward man.

Yet it will not be denied, that ere the world can be restored to happiness, some principles of action must be recognised different from those which have hitherto prevailed among the nations, and presided over the legislation of Christendom. Man must become the child of reason rather than of passion; and to accomplish that, religion, or rather God, must have the ascendency which is his due. The Saviour developed such principles on earth. Calvin strove to render them paramount at Geneva, as they claim to be. The object was worthy of his wide-grasping mind; and even to have failed in such an attempt, signalized him among the sons of men.

But men soon arose to thwart these laws, and the Reformer's high-toned legislation occasioned a speedy

reaction. He demanded either a second exile or submission to the Edicts. According to Hooker, he "would either have his will or leave them;" and he obtained the former, though his new opponents submitted with a reluctance similar to that with which a city yields when famine compels it to surrender. Some of the best citizens of Geneva confess that all its greatness was owing to the Edicts thus passed, and the courts thus established by Calvin.*

While thus framing laws for the government of Geneva, in many respects with a wisdom which entitles him to Montesquieu's eulogium: "The Genevese may bless the day that Calvin was born," he did not neglect the spiritual well-being of the people. About this time he published a catechism for the young, which long continued a standard among the Churches of the Reformation; and we notice this publication here, because it was the first that brought Calvin's mind in direct contact with that of Scotland, where it was at one period used in the training of youth. At the same time, his pastoral labours were incessant. His yearly lectures have been estimated at one hundred and eighty-six—his sermons at two hundred and eighty-three. Indeed, he preached daily

* The dispassionate Sennebier (Hist. Literaire de Geneve, tom. i., p. 192) thus describes these enactments: "On y reconnoit combien Calvin etait eloigné de vouloir donner trop de pouvoir au corps ecclesiastique, et avec quelle prudence il confia le salut, et la reputation des citoyens a un tribunal qui ne pouvoit jamais abuser de ses pouvoirs, tant la puissance ecclesiastique y etoit balancée par la puissance civile;" yet were they a source of interminable struggles on the part of those who indulged licentiousness, and called it libertv.

in the temple, or taught in the schools. He conducted the business of the presbytery—presided in the Consistory or session—tested the attainments of candidates for the ministry—gave his advice, from day to day, regarding the government of the Republic—received and entertained a crowd of visitors, from whom his house was seldom free—corresponded with the learned and illustrious in every land; and, amid all these distractions, was an author to an extent that has accumulated into nine folio volumes. Yet this was the man who said: "One thing I fear—lest I should appear to others to be an example of sluggishness." Some of the Reformers, who were nearly twice his age, habitually laid their difficulties before him for solution. He was, in short, the presiding spirit of the sphere in which he moved. Princes sought his counsel, and the poorest were helped by his means. Notwithstanding the acrimony with which it has long been men's habit to inveigh against him, it is true of Calvin, that when the ear heard him, it blessed him—when the eye saw, it gave witness to him. He had enemies both numerous and powerful; but then, as now, they were too often the enemies of pure religion as well as of our Reformer.

As he increased in celebrity, scarce a quarter of the Christian world can be named to which his influence did not reach. He was mainly instrumental in sending a mission to the Brazils—the first, we think, undertaken by Protestants; but, owing to the ignorance and inexperience of the men engaged in it, the enterprise ended in disappointment and disaster. Men

flocked from many lands to learn wisdom at Geneva, from him who was now its undisputed chief. Italy, Spain, and France, were each represented by a Church in the city; and so great was the influx of foreigners, attracted chiefly by Calvin's European fame, that in the course of the sixteenth century, no fewer than three thousand two hundred and twenty-two heads of families were enfranchised in Geneva, of whom only sixteen were natives. So numerous, indeed, was the concourse, that the city seemed too limited to contain them. Yet, prosperous as all this appears, Calvin was never without causes of deep disquietude. Calumny was ever busy; and the discordant elements, which had only been awed into silence, not thoroughly extinguished, threatened from time to time to convulse the Republic afresh. The new constitution of Geneva was the cause of ever-increasing offence to the dissolute, because it hampered and coerced them in their vices, and no opportunity was lost to bring it into disrepute. Countenanced by some of the ejected priests, the turbulent within the city began to renew their contentions; and the Libertines, a cabal of dissolute citizens, clamoured against the new canons, for the same reason that a prisoner complains of his jailer, or the Infidel of the Word of God.

This opposition to Calvin became yet more keen as he endeavoured to mature his large plans of reform. His anxious desires for frequent communion, and his wish to see the Lord's supper celebrated every month,*

* "Jam vero singulis mensibus cœnam celebrari maxime nobis placeret," &c.—*Calvin.*

gave occasion to violent hostility; and he rather yielded to the weakness of others than to his own convictions of what is right, when he consented that that sacrament should be dispensed only four times in a year. This, like all that he attempted for man's good, provoked a controversy or rather a conflict; but he was relieved for a little from the troubles which disturbed him at Geneva by a journey which he made to Bâle and Metz, to aid and counsel the Churches there. The only rest which he knew was a change of labour; and it were difficult to decide whether he toiled most assiduously for Geneva or the other Reformed Churches.*

In the years 1542 and 1543, the ravages of the plague, accompanied by famine, laid waste the city, and increased the difficulties of the Reformer; yet was he prepared to push forward the work of Reformation at home, and repel the heresy of unholy men abroad. Albert Pighe, one of the most celebrated of the Roman party, about this period singled out Calvin as an antagonist, in whom to overthrow certain of the Reformed doctrines, especially that regarding the bondage of the will in fallen man; but Pighe was himself discomfited, and the post which he assailed was rendered stronger than ever by Calvin's defence against the Romanist's attack. And, while thus engaged against Popish opponents, it is interest-

* The magistrates were not always ungrateful. Again and again we find in the registers of the city such an entry as the following: "On donne a Calvin un tonneau de vin vieux, pour les peinés qu'il prend de la ville."

ing to notice the feelings which Calvin cherished toward his great cotemporary, Luther. He also had published some violent invectives against the Genevese Reformer and his friends; and had the latter been only the passionate or vindictive being which many suppose, he had now an opportunity of gratifying his malice by an angry reply. But far from that — while he deplored the violence of the great patriarch of the Reformation, he remembered the blessings which he had imparted to the Church; and Calvin, therefore, apologized for Luther's asperity, instead of attacking himself. With one hand our Reformer would oppose the benefactor of the world when he departed from the simplicity of Scripture, but with the other he drew the veil of kindness over the foibles of that great man. Calvin might be rigid and severe, but it was against vice, and the enemies of the truth as it is in Jesus. To all others he was pitiful and courteous, as that truth taught him to be; while he ever met the penitent with that alacrity which the generous display to the fallen, and was oftener than once the victim of his own kindly and forgiving nature.

During the three-and-twenty years of Calvin's residence at Geneva after his recall—that is, till the period of his death—his life may be likened to one long struggle. At one period, he was using his utmost exertions to counteract the plots of Charles V., who sought to beguile the Protestants, and turn them from their stedfastness by wiles, when persecution was found to be unavailing. At another, he was no less

intently occupied in refuting heresy, and healing divisions among the Reformed themselves. From time to time his antagonists at Geneva occasioned commotions and perplexity, and the lawless conduct of many of the citizens produced utmost sorrow.* At the same period, the sufferings of the Waldenses, so cruelly massacred in Cabrieres and Merindoles, at the command of Du Bellai, governor of Piedmont, called for his interference, and all his endeavours were put forth on their behalf, and that at a time when internal factions, urged on by foreign hostility, demanded his utmost energies successfully to meet them. He had now reached such an eminence among the Reformed, that they rarely mentioned his name without a prayer for his safety; and it is scarcely too much to say, that on one so signalized the care of all the Churches was laid. Among other things, Calvin, like our own Reformers, had a keen struggle to maintain with the cupidity of those who had seized on and secularized the property of the Church. He was anxious to recover it, as the means of promoting the general interests of truth and righteousness; and though his life was pre-eminently a warfare, few of his struggles occasioned more annoyance than this. As we trace the history of such endeavours, we cannot help concluding, that if Calvin sacrificed his repose to his ambition of ruling at Geneva, as his flippant and shallow

* When the plague raged in 1545, so abandoned were some of them, that they actually agreed to take measures for spreading the infection, and too fatally succeeded before their plot was discovered. —*Spon.*

censors suppose, he acted like the maniac who leaped into the crater of Etna to secure immortality.*

Amid these commotions, Calvin again and again contemplated abandoning his post at Geneva. Disease, and even want,† added to the illness of his wife, were pressing on him, and these, eked out by his more public trials, extorted from him the desire to leave the city, at least for a season, "even though he should creep on his hands" away from it. About the same period (1546), as we shall afterwards find, Servetus renewed his correspondence with him, and at once added to his troubles, and drew forth the declaration, that if that heretic visited Geneva, Calvin would use his endeavour to prevent him from leaving it alive. But it was Amied Perrin, now chosen Captain-general of the Republic, who chiefly thwarted the Reformer's plans; and a struggle between them began about this period, which ended only with Perrin's exile. If we may believe the records of those times, his family were conspicuous above all others in Geneva, at once for their wealth and their dissoluteness; and

* The following extracts from the registers of the city are curious:—"On lui (Calvin) fit present le 29 December 1547, de tous les utensiles de son menage qui ètait a la seigneurie. Il refusa le 5 June 1553, deux-ecus d'or sol, que le conseil vouloit lui donner, pour les peines qui'il avait prises pour l'etat de Berne. Le conseil lui ayant envoyè du bois pour se chauffer le 28 December, 1556, il en apporta l'argent que l'on ne voulut pas accepter. Le conseil lui envoya le 14 Mai 1560, un tonneau du meilleur vin qu'on peut trouver parce qu'il n'en avait pas du bon. Il eut beaucoup de peine a recevoir 25 ecus pour les frais de sa maladie, et pria instamment le conseil de les reprendre le 22 June 1563."

† "Il se trouvait en necessité."

crime after crime alleged against them had become subjects of inquiry before the Consistory. The Genevese ministers, when they entered upon office, swore "never to abuse God's Word to serve their carnal affections, or to please any man;" and Calvin did not violate his oath. The moral outrages which had tarnished the new polity of Geneva were punished in the persons of Perrin and some of his kindred; and hence arose the warfare that raged so keenly and so long between the Reformer and the Captain-general of the State.*

The death of Luther, in 1546, was embraced as affording a favourable opportunity for promoting union among the Protestants. Calvin again entered warmly into the measure in which he had formerly been baffled, and proposed to Melancthon a mode of explaining the chief causes of difference which, he thought, might have tended to harmony—so desirable for all, so peculiarly precious to the large and catholic soul of Calvin. But the prospect of peace was soon overcast. The controversy regarding the Lord's supper divided the Churches; and though Calvin made concessions which exposed him to the censure of some

* The history of Perrin's proceedings may be seen in *Calvini Epistolæ*, No. 207. When Perrin fled from the city, he was executed in effigy, according to the laws of the Republic; yet it must be confessed, that some of the laws against which the Libertines reclaimed appear ludicrous when seen in the light of modern legislation. For example, it was enacted, "That no man, in what state, qualitie, or condition soever he might be, dareth be so hardie to make, or cause to be made, or to wear hosen, or doublettes cut, jagged, embroydered, or lined with silk, upon payne to forfeyte sixty sous."—*Lawes of Geneva*, &c., p. 71.

of the Protestants, the breach was widened rather than filled up. At the same time, Perrin and his allies had matured their plans for embroiling, and, if possible, for banishing the Reformer. Such was the condition of the city at this critical period, that wild popular tumults were produced; and nothing could avert the threatened anarchy but the boldness and decision of Calvin. While the city was in a state of uproar and misrule, he rushed into the midst of the rioters, and his opportune intrepidity awed the mob. He declared that he had come among them to offer his bosom to their swords, and called on them to make him their first victim, if they wished for blood. The appeal stilled the tumult, and saved the city;* but it was a new source of bitterness to the Reformer.

James Gruet, a leader of the Libertine faction, was beheaded at Geneva in 1547. He was condemned on a charge of blasphemy, in terms of the Edicts of the city; and it has been supposed that he died a martyr to freedom of opinion. His conduct, however, was such as to outrage all the laws of the State. The mere catalogue of his crimes, as given by Spon and Sennebier, is such as to show that the civil arm was bound to interfere in defence of the rights of society, though religious errors formed part of the charges against him.

But all local considerations were again merged in the danger which threatened the Churches, when Charles V. devised and promulgated new and insidious measures for checking the Reformation. It

* See *Calv. Epist.*, No. 82.

could not be put down by force, and must, therefore, be assailed by stratagem. A document, entitled the *Interim*, was accordingly published, with the design of restoring Popery, or reclaiming the Protestants; and its statements were so ambiguous, ensnaring, and dangerous, that Calvin said, the Reformers must now be "as ready for suffering as if the sword were raised above their heads, or the fires kindled to consume them." It aimed at the same result, and produced the same evils, as the Indulgences granted to our struggling forefathers; but our Reformer boldly faced the danger, and his efforts, both in correspondence and as an author, were blessed to diminish the peril, by inspiriting men to meet it.

In the hope of healing the divisions at Geneva, Calvin, after some negotiations, proposed to restore Perrin to the position of influence which he had lost by his outrages; and for a time this generosity was rewarded with peace. But fresh commotions soon arose. The city became again like the troubled sea. Truth and error—the flesh and the spirit—religion and the natural heart, were in conflict; and tumult was the result. A Popish writer, Bernini,* makes Calvin behead Perrin on the altar-stone of the Cathedral in Geneva; and though that deed had actually been perpetrated, the violence of many against him could scarcely have been more intense. There were, however, some sources of solace opened up to the Reformer amid his troubles. He rejoiced to find England actively engaged in the work of Reformation, and wrote

* Historia di tutte l'Heresie.

to the Duke of Somerset, then protector of the kingdom, on the subject; urged him forward in the work of sweeping away abuses and every relic of superstition, and plied him with all the arguments which experience or principle suggested, for completing what had been so well begun. There are many now in the Church of England who labour to disprove the share which Calvin took in promoting the Reformation of their country, or the ascendency which he and his opinions held over the minds of her greatest and most honoured men, the founders of their Church's polity, and till lately, her boast and her glory. But the history of the period must be mutilated or effaced before the attempt succeed. Nothing can more clearly evince the hardihood of men in denying the best authenticated events, when partisanship demands the denial, than the endeavours in question. Cranmer, Ridley, Parker, and other English Reformers, were Calvin's correspondents; and though he chid the "tolerable fooleries" which they retained in their liturgy and service, he at the same time strove with all his energy to advance the cause of truth among them. It is an ungrateful requital for his labours to deny that he laboured at all. Calvin was thanked by Archbishop Parker, in Queen Elizabeth's name, for his interest in reforming England; and that single fact refutes a thousand calumnies.*

To add to his other sorrows, Calvin's wife died in the year 1549. From his letters on the subject, it appears that she was an helpmate worthy of such a

* See Toplady's Historic Proof, pp. 367–381.

man. His was, therefore, though a deep, not a hopeless sorrow; he felt, but was not overwhelmed. Amid his trials, he practised as he taught; so that his example confirmed what his lips proclaimed, although his sorrow was so great that seven years after his bereavement, he referred to it with feeling remembrance. The void which her departure occasioned was great, but grace in him was greater still; and he bore his calamity as a Christian should do. It is pleasing to study the conduct of one so signalized as Calvin, when thus placed on a level with common mortals by the hand of death. Christendom now acknowledged his pre-eminence — sovereigns sought his aid—even Rome felt uneasy at his power; but his character never seems greater than when he mourns the death of his consort, and comes down from the height to which Providence had raised him to mingle in the sorrows, and manifest the tenderness of man. The power which subjugated the Genevese factions, or guided the Reformed Churches, and the affection which tended the sick-bed of a dying wife, were in Calvin's mind only different aspects of the same lofty principle — dependence on a covenant God.

Lelius Socinus, Servetus, and others, by the heresies which they spread about this period (1549), tended to endanger or to weaken the cause of the Reformation, or even to undermine revelation itself; and Calvin's attention was turned to the increasing evil. While he strove to check their ruinous heresy, he was not unmindful either of promoting peace among the Refor-

mers or proclaiming war at once against the craft and the cruelty of Charles and the persecutors. In consequence of his untiring assiduity, and his influence over men, a decree was passed about this time, enacting that those who were guilty of holding intercourse with Geneva should be burned to death at a slow fire.* Religious reform so wrought on men's minds, that liberty at once for the body and the soul became a passion burning intensely, and earnestly pursued; and the tyrants of that age sought to crush that spirit, where the serpents sought to crush the infant Hercules—in its cradle, Geneva.

Any one who has devoted due attention to Calvin's history, or has examined his manuscripts in the library of Geneva, will have no difficulty in concluding that he kept the consciences of a large portion of Europe.† Yet it were a pleasing task, and might disabuse the minds of his traducers, to show the mildness with which he dealt with all who were in quest of truth: "Let my name be unknown, or utterly buried —if the truth prevail," was his constant maxim; and it at once explains the secret of his ascendency, and prompts our surprise at the bitterness with which his memory is assailed. There were men who resorted to Geneva to impose on Calvin's benevolence, and who, when detected, like Bolsec and Baldouin, became his bitterest enemies. Their enmity we can

* Hist. des Eglises, ascribed to Beza, vol. i., p. 82.

† Among the folio manuscripts of Calvin there is one fasciculus, with the following title: "Lettres par divers Rois, Princes, Seigneurs, et Dames pour le consulter sur les cas de conscience epineaux, ou pour le remercier de ses ouvrages."

understand; but for men who profess to love truth and godliness, to assail the Reformer, can be the result only of ignorance and prejudice.

Owing to the toils and perils to which Calvin was exposed, the report was repeatedly circulated that he was dead; a general rumour of that kind prevailed in 1551, and so greatly were the monks of his native city, Noyon, delighted by the intelligence, that they went in solemn procession to render thanks to God for the heresiarch's death. He thus learned his own importance in their eyes—while he was at the time busily engaged in defending the truth which those monks corrupted, and conducting a controversy against Jerome Bolsec, on the subject of predestination. It led to the fickle Bolsec's expulsion from the city; and had not the future conduct of that versatile Frenchman, who relapsed into Popery, proved that his heart was unsound, the judgment of the magistrates against him might have been reckoned severe. He was one of those unstable yet pretending men, who are most sorely punished by neglect; and, perhaps, Calvin's great reputation was not advanced by the part which he took against him. He was, in truth, too mean an opponent for our Reformer; and only the critical position to which Geneva was reduced by the violence of faction could justify any proceeding against one so vacillating or so feeble as Bolsec.

In the year 1552, the faction at Geneva again became as turbulent as ever. Their malice was now chiefly directed against the refugees from Italy, France, and other Popish countries, whom Calvin befriended,

and who were devotedly attached to him in return. Cabals were formed, and plans were laid which, had they succeeded, would have driven Calvin into exile, and perhaps hurried some of the refugees to the stake. It was amid scenes such as these that the year 1553 dawned on the little city of Geneva—the year in which the unhappy Servetus arrived in it, and was hurried to a death by many reckoned that of a martyr. In subsequent chapters, the different steps of his lamentable trial will be traced with the accuracy of history, and an evidence that may supersede all future inquiry.*

Subsequent to the trial of Servetus, the controversy between the civil and the spiritual courts, regarding the power of excommunication, was carried on with oppressive injustice on the one hand, and great boldness on the other. The Edicts of the city, based on the Word of God, had vested that power where it ought to be—in the hands of the spiritual rulers; but the magistrates had illegally seized on the power, and restored Philibert Berthelier, an excommunicated person, to his place at the Lord's table. The ministers of the city reclaimed, because the laws both of the Scriptures and the Republic were outraged; and hence arose a long protracted struggle between the spiritual and the civil powers, which terminated in an appeal to the Helvetic Churches as umpires. They unanimously decided in favour of Calvin; so that a new triumph gave new consolidation to his power.†

* This refers to the following translations from Rilliet.

† This contest will be described in a subsequent part of this

Rather than submit to Erastian interference, Calvin was determined either to die or be driven again into banishment. His decision for the truth was blessed to secure a victory; and the obnoxious decree of the Council, constituting the civil magistrate a judge in spiritual things, was rescinded.

Meanwhile the heresy of Servetus was spreading—Poland, Hungary, and other places began to be infected; and when the grief of this was added to his other sorrows, Calvin at last determined to quit Geneva. For now nearly twenty years, he had scarcely known repose within its walls, and as connection with him exposed its citizens to persecution and death, as soon as the oppressors had them in their power, he was anxious at once to free others from such danger, and himself from such misery. But about that period (1554) our Knox arrived at Geneva; and, encouraged by such a coadjutor, Calvin continued to resist his enemies and uphold the truth, as before. Their kindred feelings, and principles, and aspirations made them the helpers of each others joys, and the soothers of each others sorrows; and amid the commotions which so often convulsed Geneva, a friendship was formed between these two men which influenced not merely their respective Churches, but whose effects will stretch into eternity, as they helped to dissipate spiritual darkness from many a mind, and teach thou-

volume. It entered largely, as we shall hereafter see, into the causes which decided the doom of Servetus—though this has never yet been adverted to with that care which justice to the Reformer's memory demands.

sands to stand fast in their spiritual freedom. Nor was such a comforter unneeded by Calvin. The bloody Mary now filled the English throne. Godliness was dragged to the stake or driven into exile; and hence Geneva had become an asylum for the persecuted from England as well as from other lands. Indeed, whether heresy infected, or persecution peeled and scattered, the Churches, it was felt as a local disaster in that city, so close were its connections with every Reformed country. While Calvin bewailed the death of Ridley and Latimer in England, and the burning of all but uncounted multitudes in France, our countryman, installed as minister of an English congregation at Geneva, aided him with his counsels, or participated in his sorrows. A Protestant Church was at the same time organized in Poland; and "the Christian Hercules,"* at the request of the king, drew up its constitution. But while he was endeavouring to plant the seeds of truth in that kingdom, the disciples of Servetus began to grow bold at Geneva. Matthew Gribaldo, a lawyer of some celebrity, adopted that unhappy man's tenets; and much dispeace to the Reformer and the Republic was the result.

In consequence of Calvin's harassing employments and crowding cares, his health, which had always been delicate, now began to decline. He was still in the vigour of life; but trials and engagements like his antedate old age; and in the year 1556, when only in his forty-seventh year, he was seized with an illness in the pulpit—where it might almost be said that he

* Beza's name for Calvin.

lived—which forced him for a season, in some measure, to withdraw from public life. But amid his trials, he continued to be cheered by the presence of Knox; and our own Reformer has recorded the joy which he felt at witnessing the reformation now produced by Calvin's instrumentality at Geneva. The ecclesiastical discipline, which the great Condé visited that city avowedly to examine, and which was so offensive to the licentious, but so promotive of purity when administered according to the Word of God, had led to its proper results; and Knox gives this testimony to their extent: "I neither fear," he says, "nor shame to say that Geneva is the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the apostles. In other places, I confess Christ to be truly preached, but manners and religion so sincerely reformed, I have not yet seen in any other place beside."* In proportion to his self-sacrificing efforts was the obloquy of Calvin's enemies; but his soul was borne up and onwards by the sight of good accomplished, and of men reformed well-nigh in spite of themselves, and he continued to act as "the prop of the Reformation," until, directly or indirectly, all its Churches felt the influence of his mind. The glory of God is the final cause of religion. Antagonism on the part of his people against all evil is

* A similar testimony has been borne to the effects of the platform which Knox himself set up in Scotland. After referring to the changes, Kirkton says: "Scotland hath ever been by emulous foreigners called Philadelphia; and now (1649) she seemed to be in her flower."

the law of working it out; and Calvin threw himself heart and soul into the work—the noblest, nay, the only noble one, that can engross the attention of man.

The closing years of his life were naturally of a less stirring kind than those which went before. Blandrata, Alciati, Stancari, Gentili, and other ingenious but unstable men, who appear to have adopted the errors of Servetus, with various modifications, and thus departed far from the simplicity of the truth, often disturbed the peace of his declining days; and a renewed attack of his former illness, in his fiftieth year, tended further to enfeeble the venerable man. For eight months he was unable for public duty; but his days and nights, in spite of every remonstrance, were still given to the work of counselling the Churches. From the effects of this illness he never completely recovered. His right leg continued ever after so weak that he often required to be carried to his pulpit or his chair. His soul had over-informed and over-tasked his feeble frame, and premature old age was the result.

In the year 1558 Knox was invited to return to Scotland. At Calvin's urgent suit, he consented to the proposal; and these noble brothers separated in the month of January 1559, till they should meet before the throne. The period of his departure was critical, and Calvin, no doubt, felt his isolation. A plot had been formed to crush Genevese liberty, and re-annex the Republic to Savoy. Henry II. of France was at the head of the scheme; but, when meditating that design, he was killed in a tournament by one of his own officers; and the alarms of Calvin for his

adopted home were thus providentially dispelled. They had only increased, while they lasted, his zeal for advancing its welfare; and, co-operating with some of the most learned men of his time, he now carried into effect what had long been with him a favourite project—the founding of a Seminary such as the wants of the age and the celebrity of Geneva demanded. The distinguished Bonnivard helped to endow it. Beza was its first president, and it soon became as famed as the city in which it was established. The spirit which reared that institution was kindred with that which animated Knox in his educational plans; and the pre-eminence of Geneva and Scotland among the nations of the earth attests the far-seeing wisdom of the Reformers.

Calvin was now much enfeebled, in consequence of an effusion of blood from the lungs, added to his other ailments and debility. He was, at the same time, distracted by increasing solicitations for counsel from every land; while the number of his stanch and untiring antagonists appeared to increase with his years. A mere catalogue of their names induces us to wonder how one enfeebled and prematurely aged man could encounter them all, and that nearly at the same time. Blandrata, Gentili, Stancari, Gribaldo, Baldouin, Castalio, Heshuse, and others, felt his controversial power, either together or in rapid succession, while he continued to publish commentary upon commentary, and treatise upon treatise, as if he had lived utterly retired and secluded from the activities of his stirring times. The loss of Knox was now

compensated by the acquisition of Theodore Beza, sent in providence as a comforter to the Reformer's closing days; and his heart was re-animated thereby, as well as by the tidings that persecution was becoming less hot in France, and pure religion more and more vigorous in Poland. It is pleasing to notice, amid all his pains, how warm was the interest which he continued to take in the welfare of the Church of Scotland—indeed, of every Church which would listen to his counsels; and it is no less gratifying to observe the change that had at last come over the people and rulers of Geneva towards their great Reformer. The Protestant princes invited Calvin to be present at a conference held at Poissy, in France, that they might be aided by his advice; but the Council of Geneva would not grant their consent, unless hostages "of the first rank" were given for his safe-conduct and return.* No longer hated and traduced, men had learned to bow to his authority, if they had not all imbibed his spirit; and he gradually became the object of as deep veneration as he had formerly been the victim of contumely and persecution.

Two thousand one hundred and fifty Reformed Churches had now been planted in France. His native country had cast him out—his native city had returned thanks to God for his supposed death; and the founding of these churches was the Reformer's revenge. In Germany, Luther operated on the spot; the same is true of Knox in Scotland; but Calvin laboured at a distance, by his letters and his books,

* Spon, i., 307, Note O.

not by his present person and his living voice—and yet his efforts, blessed by God, were crowned with the success which we have mentioned. He and his co-adjutors wielding their weapons from afar, shook the superstition of a nation. It was the power of truth—the manifest interposition of Heaven—the little stone cut out of the mountain gradually covering the land.

But his debility increased, and his complaints gradually became more numerous and overpowering. At last, intestinal inflammation reduced his strength, so far as to threaten to cut him off (8th October 1561). Perpetual vomitings, and a general upbreaking of his overwrought constitution, were added to his other symptoms. From time to time, however, he was able to preach; nor did his other labours terminate—it was with reluctance that they were even diminished. His correspondence with all the Churches was still maintained; and had it been otherwise, he could ill have been spared. Civil war now began to devastate France; and those woes commenced by which wicked men sought to extirpate religion from that land, which eventually deluged it with blood, or turned it into a hunting-field for Popery to let loose its vengeance against the truth—a preserve in which victims might be prepared in holocausts—in hundreds of thousands, for the Man of Sin.

But though Calvin revived from time to time, his bodily vigour was broken. He was still able, however, occasionally to preach and lecture, and even to address the Emperor Charles once more on the subject of his untiring persecutions. But the record

of his life henceforth (1562) becomes little more than a register of sufferings; and it was only because he could not exist apart from the cause to which all his energies were devoted, that he continued to revise and republish his works, or even to originate new productions.* His interest in the religious welfare of Poland was one of the last which the progress of disease subdued.

On the 6th of February 1564, Calvin preached his last sermon. From that day he was unfit for the discharge of his public duties, though, while he was able to be carried to church, he sometimes added a few exhortations to those of the preacher. His own account of the "crowd" of diseases which assailed him, now rendered it plain that nature must soon sink under the pressure. His pain was sometimes excruciating, and his slender frame, inclining to consumption, could ill withstand such shocks as he endured; yet his only exclamation was: "How long, O Lord? how long?" On the 27th of March, he was present for the last time in the Council. On the 2d of April he was carried to church. He thereafter made his Will—a singularly instructive document, in which he drops the polemic for ever, and becomes only a Christian, longing to die at peace with all. It is the act of the departing believer, embracing for the last time those whom he will not embrace again till they meet before the throne, to follow the Lamb whithersoever he leadeth. In that document, Calvin clings with a fond

* His last work was his Prelections on Ezekiel, which he left unfinished. See the Preface.

tenacity to the common centre of the spiritual universe—Christ—the Saviour of the lost—the Reconciler of the guilty—God with us. The eulogy pronounced by Morus upon Calvin there receives a practical illustration: CHRISTUM PECTORE — CHRISTUM ORE— CHRISTUM OPERA SPIRAT.

His next desire was to meet the magistrates of the city once more ere he departed—and that wish was accorded. They assembled at his house to hear the counsels of the dying saint and sage; the interview is the finest instance of the influence which the Church should exert on the State which is to be found, perhaps, in the whole history of the Church; while Calvin's words are all that even he could have spoken on a death-bed — ardent, eloquent, sublimely holy, faithful. This peroration of his public life was intensely pathetic. He prayed—shook hands with the rulers; and they parted in tears, never to meet till they assemble again before the Judge of all.

On the 28th of April, the Ministers of the Canton were assembled to receive the parting counsel of their honoured brother, as he passed on before them to his reward. The emaciated frame of the holy man was animated for a little with renovated vigour, and words were spoken which touched the souls of all. Benevolence, humility, holiness, the fruits of the Spirit, were there. Farel came to visit him, and after that venerable minister departed, Calvin's time was exclusively occupied in prayer. His agony sometimes extorted a cry; but he hushed the voice of *nature* by the words: "I was silent, Lord, for thou didst it."

Grace was now triumphant—it was just melting into glory. His life tells how a Christian should live—his death-bed shows how a Christian may die.

On the 19th of May, Calvin was so far revived that he could sup with his brethren; and when he left them, he remarked that his spirit would still linger among them. From that day he lay for the most part in a state of stupor; but on Saturday the 27th of May, he again rallied for a little, and was dictating to a friend, who acted as his secretary, only eight hours before his death. But at eight o'clock on the evening of that day—John Calvin died. No struggle accompanied his dissolution—not a doubt was expressed—not a limb was moved—his senses, his judgment, even his voice, left him only with his breath, and Beza found him "tranquilly dead." He had lived somewhat less than fifty-five years; but into that period, the work of centuries was compressed.

The tidings were received with general lamentation. The city mourned her wisest citizen; the Church lamented her ablest pastor; the college, its founder; and all, their friend. Crowds flocked to see his remains. Foreigners who came to visit or to hear him—among others, Queen Elizabeth's ambassador—mingled in the throng. On Sabbath the 28th, the corpse was placed in the coffin; on the 29th, it was laid in the grave. At Calvin's own request, no pomp followed him to the tomb; and no stone was raised to tell who lay below. The place of his sepulture in the grave-yard of Plein Palais is unknown; but though, like that of Moses, all unknown to mortal eye, the body is

"still united to Christ"—the corruptible is waiting for its clothing of incorruption.

"ἱερον ὑπνον
Κοιμᾶται· θνησκειν μη λεγε τους ἀγαθους."

We offer no elaborate character of Calvin here. The whole space in which we have hastily glanced at his life would be insufficient to describe aright even his closing days. Do we regard him as a Commentator?—He has shed the light of deep study, and deeper godliness, over nearly every book of Scripture except the Apocalypse. The word of God was to him as sacred as if he had heard Jehovah speak it. In judiciousness, his expositions are unrivalled. The intense acuteness of his mind, and his wide grasp of thought, enabled him to seize on first principles, so that his system is pre-eminently one of essential truths. No mind can penetrate farther, or soar higher than his did; and hence his favour with the thinking—his offensiveness to the superficial.

Do we think of him as a Christian?—Christ was his ALL. Self was laid in the dust. It was the very soul of his religious conviction to say: "Man must be nothing, that God in Christ may be everything." His God was Father, Son, and Spirit—the only living and true God. Belief in that God as reconciling sinners to himself in Christ had become the basis and the strength of Calvin's character.

Do we regard him as a Reformer?—He is second to none in the influence which he exerted in the glorious emancipation which took place in the sixteenth

century. The planting of more than two thousand Reformed Churches in France attests his ascendency and power; and his works still follow him.

Do we study him as a Friend?—Never was man more intensely loved than Calvin. His colleagues leant on him with an idolatrous affection. He possessed the secret and inexplicable power of binding men to him by ties which nothing but sin or death could sever. They treasured up every word that dropped from his lips; and were this the place, we might explain how their friendship led to some of the most singular plans for collecting his sayings which the history of literature supplies.* The harsh and "horrible" doctrines ignorantly imputed to him by men who know his religious opinions only in travesty and caricature, had not succeeded in chilling what was genial, or souring what was nobly generous in his nature.

In a tall and somewhat fantastic mansion, in one of the streets leading from the Lake to the Cathedral of Geneva, might often be seen assembled a group of grave and reverend men. The chamber in which they met was small and meanly furnished; for its occupant was so poor that his very bed was not his own. Its chief ornaments were goodly folios, among which those of Augustine were conspicuous. In that group the visitor might see one man of venerable aspect, with silvery hair and flowing beard—resolute, yet mild —fearless against an enemy, but gentle and bland among friends. It was William Farel of Neufchatel.

* See Preface to Calvin's Prelections on Hosea, by Crispinus.

Beside him, and almost leaning upon his bosom, was another—child-like, gentle, and timid by nature, yet inured by the spirit of the times and by frequent perils, to dare and achieve great things. That was Peter Viret of Lausanne. Beside them sat one whose nobility of mien told that he was designed for great events. While his keen, penetrating eye, and his bearing to those around him bespoke his large affections, they also proclaimed that he did not fear the face of man. It was the Reformer of Scotland—Knox. Less prominent in the group were some younger spirits—Theodore Beza, and one or two Italian refugees—rather listening to the discussion than mingling in it; and somewhat toward one corner of the apartment, sat two who obviously did not enter with their whole souls into the evening's entertainment. They could not sympathize with the deep and thorough reform of all Church grievances for which the men assembled pled. They could not understand why human inventions and "tolerable fooleries" should not be tolerated; and though they were suffering for the truth, it was truth in lawn-sleeves and scapularies, or at least truth in a surplice, that they loved. These were two English exiles—Cox perhaps, and a colleague—honest and devout, yet not deep-seeing men, nor thoroughly abhorrent of the "Popish dregs." But the *genius loci* was one whom no fooleries could captivate. His sharp and prominent profile spoke of penetrating acuteness. His clear and ever-glancing eye was one which could still the tumult of the people, as well as look in warm affection on the friends he loved. His countenance,

wasted and sicklied over with the paleness of thought and suffering, beamed with gentleness, while it could also express, as occasion demanded, the deepest emotions of man's soul. It was Calvin entertaining his friends in his study—regaling their souls with his wit as well as with his learning — the man whom Europe has for centuries agreed to hate—whom all who knew him loved, idolized, and clung to like the ivy to the wall, or the vine tree to the elm.

In a word, Calvin may be likened to Cato as a rigid censor; but his standard for censuring was that of God, while his errors were those of his age. The asperity of his language against Servetus, Castalio, Baldouin, and others, may be explained, but cannot be excused. Truest charity will lament it; and while we bless God that such an one was given to the Churches—his conduct towards heretics reminds us that it is *man* we are admiring—the treasure was in an earthen vessel; but how glorifying to God, that an earthen vessel should have achieved so much!

Finally, do we regard Calvin as a sufferer for righteousness' sake?—He encountered what the Master whom he loved predicted—tribulation; it was sometimes his only earthly portion. He proved that he was not of the world, else "the world would have loved its own." By the grace of God that was in him, be surpassed and subdued his antagonists, but in doing so, he earned the reward which the world, in every age, has allotted to those who seek to rescue it from perdition by beckoning it with faithful earnestness to the Saviour of the lost.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE OF SERVETUS.*

About the middle of the year 1553, a stranger of unprepossessing appearance entered Geneva, then accustomed to see numerous refugees seeking the shelter of its walls. To say that he fled from France, because certain Popish judges had condemned him to the flames for heresy, would not be to describe that stranger, but rather to confound him with the crowd of outlaws for whom innumerable funeral piles were then prepared in countries devoted to the faith of Rome; but to say that, three months thereafter, that very man, outside the walls of Geneva, died in the flames to which the same crime of heresy had caused him to be condemned by Protestant magistrates†—*that* is to name Servetus. His funeral pile is signalized only by the fact that, where it was reared, it appeared alone,‡ but one might say, that, by a fatal destiny, Servetus

* It is here that the translation from Rilliet begins.—Translator.

† It will be noticed that Rilliet here indicates, at the very outset, who it was that condemned Servetus—the Protestant magistrates of Geneva.—Tr.

‡ Incidents will hereafter be mentioned which show that this is not literally correct.—Tr.

could not otherwise perish. Born in Spain, the native country of the *auto-da-fé*, he fled from it only to see his effigy consumed in a foreign land, by the torch of a Popish executioner, and at last to die in flames kindled by Calvinistic justice.*

We now design to trace the details of this last event, confining ourselves strictly to an exposition of facts, as they have been discovered by a careful analysis of the authentic and original papers used in the proceedings, as well as by the attentive study of the internal condition of Geneva, at the time of the trial. This double source of information, from which the different writers on this subject have not sufficiently drawn, has enabled us to reproduce, with greater fidelity than has hitherto been done, the details of the criminal prosecution undertaken against Michael Servetus, in the capital of the French Reformation.†

A few words will suffice to convey to the reader all that he requires to know of the life of Servetus.

Michael Serveto, called also Reves (such is the double name which he gives himself in his first work), was born about the year 1509 at Villanova, in Arragon, in the diocese of Lerida. His father, who had probably destined him for the Church, perceiving that he united to a decided taste for religious speculations, an avowed hostility to scholastic theology, feared that his

* Suivez Servet partout ou il va. N'est-il pas singulier qu'il se rende insupportable en tous lieux, et qu'il se fasse chasser de partout?—*Biblioth. Raisonée*, vol. i., p. 376.—Tr.

† See Appendix A.

son would, sooner or later, be found in the grasp of the Inquisition, owing to his tendency to quarrel, and therefore sent him, in the year 1528, to study law at the University of Toulouse. Servetus formed a connection in that city with some youths who had been attracted by the Lutheran innovations, and they induced him to study the Gospel along with them. Being himself promptly animated by the desire to share in the work of the Reformation, he quitted Toulouse, traversed Italy, where he saw Charles V. crowned (February 1530)—then took the road for Germany, to confer with the leaders of the religious movement, and fixed his residence at Bâle, near the Reformer Œcolampadius.

After having at first favourably welcomed Servetus, Œcolampadius discovered that he made the Reformation consist not merely in rejecting the errors imputed to the Romish Church, but even in discarding a doctrine held to be essentially Christian by the preachers of the new faith—namely, the doctrine of the Trinity. This discovery immediately detached Œcolampadius from Servetus, and he experienced the same cold reception from Bucer and Capito, the Reformers of Strasburg. The isolation in which he was thus left did not discourage him, and he now sought adherents by becoming an author. In 1531, he published at Haguenau his book entitled *De Trinitatis Erroribus, Libri* VII.,*

* We have seen a copy of this work in the Bibliotheca Angelica at Rome. Its title is, *De Trinitatis Erroribus, Libri Septem. Per Michaelem Serveto, alias Reves, ab Arragonia, Hispanum.* —Tr.

in which he attacked the doctrine of the Trinity as professed by both communions. In the following year he published another work, where he still maintains his views, and, moreover, exhibits his peculiar opinions upon some points of the controversy which divided the two Churches, between which he pretends to occupy an independent position. One sees the theories there appearing which he afterwards developed at length, and which affected the whole of Christianity.* These writings spread by degrees in Germany and Italy, where they were not without partisans.†

Servetus encountered only more determined opposition at Strasburg and Bâle after the publication of his books; and perceiving that his attempt was unsuccessful, he decided, for the time, to change both his profession and his name. It was accordingly under that of Villeneuve that he went to France, about the year 1533, to devote himself to the study of medicine. At Paris he pursued it with brilliant success,‡ yet without losing sight of his religious speculations; and he even desired

* A copy of this work is also in the Angelic Library at Rome, and it is thus marked in the catalogue: *Liber iste ipsa raritate rarior.* It is a neat octavo of 95 pages, and the title is as follows: *Dialogorum de Trinitate, Libri duo. De Justicia Regni Christi, Capitula quatuor. Per Michaelem Serveto, alias Reves, ab Arragonia Hispanum, Anno* MDXXXII.—TR.

† Dr M'Crie thinks that the heterodox opinions which prevailed in Italy in the sixteenth century, were introduced by these writings of Servetus.—*Hist. of Reform. in Italy*, pp. 150, 151. See Melancthon's opinion, ibid. p. 152: "L'on pouvoit peutetre assurer que les desputes anti-Trinitaires ont arrêté le progres de la Reformation."—*Biblioth. Angloise*, vol ii., p. 89.—TR.

‡ Sigmond, in a work entitled "Unnoticed Theories of Servetus," has a note from which it appears that the heretic gave "the first

to hold a conference with Calvin on the subject of religion, though circumstances occurred to prevent it. Urged by want, Servetus removed to Lyons in 1535, where he became a corrector of the press; and published, with characteristic notes, a good edition of the Geography of Ptolemy. Having subsequently returned to Paris in 1537, he there taught geography, mathematics, and even astrology, with success. The last branch drew down upon him an accusation from the Sorbonne, and a sentence of the parliament; upon which he again quitted Paris, and went to Charlieu, near Lyons, where he continued for two years to practise his profession. At last he went, in the year 1540, to reside at Vienne, in Dauphiné, where his protector, the Archbishop Pierre Paumier, had his residence. In that town, he was again employed in his profession as a physician, and also upon some literary works for the booksellers of Lyons, who published a second edition of his Ptolemy, and a Latin Bible for which he had written the preface and notes.

Indeed, far from renouncing theology, Servetus made all his studies bear upon it, and time had confirmed his mind in the determination to urge on a restoration of Christianity more complete than that at which the Reformers had paused. As he had already sounded Œcolampadius, he next tried to ascertain the mind of Calvin, before attempting to realize his object; and by the mediation of a third party, he put the Reformer in possession either of a new work which

account of the circulation of the blood above seventy years before the immortal Harvey published his discovery."—Tr.

Servetus proposed to publish, or of some theological questions on which he solicited Calvin's judgment. A correspondence took place between them, in which the former showed himself little disposed to abandon certain opinions which Calvin combated, and employed language toward the Reformer which deeply wounded him. He withdrew from all connection with the Spaniard in the month of February 1546, whom he held to be incorrigible; and at the same time Calvin thus wrote to Viret: "Servetus has lately written to me, and has added to his letters an enormous volume of reveries, informing me, with incredible arrogance, that I shall there see things astonishing and unheard of. He offers to come hither, if I please; but I do not wish to pledge my word; for if he come, I shall not suffer him to depart alive, as far as my influence can avail."*

At the close of their controversy, Servetus, repelled by Calvin, addressed himself, without greater success, first to Abel Popin, a pastor at Geneva, and next to the Reformer, Peter Viret, then established at Lausanne. Perceiving that he was of new reduced to the necessity of relying only on himself, Servetus was not discouraged, but resuming his labours on the work which he had sent to Calvin and Viret, he prepared it for publication. With him it was a matter of conscience to manifest to the world the only true principles of the

* Upon this letter, of which the genuineness was long disputed, see *Henry*, Das Leben J. Calvins, 1835, Erster Band, Einleitung S. xxi. (Alex. Morus reasons strenuously against its genuineness.) —Tr.

Christian faith, and to fight the good fight against all assailants. One perceives, in reading his work, that he believed himself to be accomplishing a holy mission —almost a task imposed on him from Heaven.*

In the month of April 1552, he solicited a bookseller of Bâle to undertake an impression of his work, and met with a refusal. He then determined to have it clandestinely printed at Vienne, and a printer of that town consented to construct a secret workshop for that purpose. The book appeared about the commencement of the year 1553. It was entitled *Christianismi Restitutio*,† and embraces all the

* Such are the opinions of Rilliet. The constancy of Servetus at the stake proves how profoundly he was convinced that he was attempting what our author here describes.—Tr.

† The name of Servetus does not appear on the title-page of the work, but it is indicated at p. 199; at the end of the book, his initials are found, *M.S.V.* 1553—Michael Serveto Villanovanus. Three copies of the original edition are said to exist. That of the King's Library at Paris, which Rilliet consulted, bears the name of Colladon—the same person probably who will be named in the following account of the trial. There was published, in 1790, a reprint of the *Christianismi Restitutio*, in which the first edition is reproduced page for page to the number of 734. (The full title of the work is as follows: "Restitutio Christianismi—hoc est, totius ecclesiæ apostolicæ ad sua limina vocatio, in integrum restitutâ cognitione Dei, fidei, Christianæ Justificationis, nostræ regenerationis, baptismi, et cœnæ Domini manducationis; restituto denique nobis regno cœlesti Babylonis impiæ captivitate soluto, et Anti-Christo cum suis penitus destructo." A copy of this work was bequeathed by a Dr Sims to George Sigmond, M.D., author of a work already referred to regarding Servetus, and the following note is prefixed to that copy: "The fate of this work has been not a little singular. All the copies except one were burned along with their author, by the implacable Calvin. This copy was secreted and saved by D. Colladon, one

ideas, theoretical and practical, by which Servetus proposed to displace the monstrous errors of the Romish Church, and the pretended reforms of the Protestant doctors, both being equally opposed, according to him, to the spirit of the Gospel and to primitive Christianity. This work was less the exposition of a definite heresy, than a complete plan of reform; and if it had been able to force itself into publicity, the effect would, perhaps, have been great, and the name of Servetus might not have awakened, as now, only the idea of anti-Trinitarian.*

The book had scarcely issued from the press, and was not exposed for sale, when a copy found its way

of the judges. After passing through the library of the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, it came into the hands of Dr Mead, who endeavoured to give a quarto edition of it; but before it was nearly completed it was seized, ... on the 27th of May 1723, at the instance of Dr Gibson, Bishop of London, and burned—a very few copies excepted. The late Duke de Valliere gave near 400 guineas for this copy; and at his sale it brought 3810 livres. It contains the first account of the circulation of the blood, seventy years before the immortal Harvey published his discovery." Upon the information conveyed in this note, Dr Sigmond says: "In justice to the memory of my late valued friend, I must state my conviction that this copy is not the original one." The contents of the present note make it plain that Sigmond's conviction was correct. See "Unnoticed Theories of Servetus," pp. 22, 23.—Tr.

* If Sigmond's opinion regarding the scientific or professional theories of Servetus be correct, Rilliet's conjecture in the text is not without foundation; indeed, the contradictions apparent in the books of the heretic are not their least remarkable feature. In a sentence quoted by Sigmond, the following words occur: " . . . . modum generationis Christi docens, quod ipse non sit creatura, nec finitæ potentiæ, sed vere adorandus, verusque Deus." Yet the Socinians claim him as their proto-martyr.—Tr.

to Geneva. Had Calvin any knowledge of it?* We know not that he had. What is certain is, that on the 26th of February 1553, a French refugee, named William de Trie, residing at Geneva, and a friend of the Reformer, denounced the work of Servetus to a relation who lived at Lyons, sent him the first sheet, reproaching him, at the same time, for the want of zeal among the Catholics in repressing such blasphemies, and pointed out as the author the physician practising at Vienne, under the name of Villeneuve. The Lyonese transmitted the information of De Trie to the Inquisitor of the diocese; and Servetus was exposed, along with his papers, to a rigorous examination. They could extort nothing from him, nor discover aught that could prove that he was the author of the denounced volume. The Lyonese then applied again to De Trie for more ample information; who replied by sending some letters written by Servetus himself to Calvin, in one of which the Spaniard explained his change of name. De Trie declared that he had, in some measure, extorted these letters from the Reformer; but that he had done so in order not to appear to have lodged a false accusation against Servetus. The latter always regarded Calvin as the true accuser. He, on his part, formally repelled that imputation.†

* Rilliet answers his own question at a future stage of his inquiry, where he makes it apparent that it was through the channels opened up by trade, or from business connections, that the book was so speedily sent to Geneva.—Tr.

† *Declaration*, p. 1337. "Il n'est ia besoin, d'insister plus longuement à rembarrer une calomnie si frivole, laquelle tombe bas quand i'auray dit en un mot qu'il n'en est rien."

Upon receiving these additional proofs, the Inquisitor requested the arrest of Servetus; and it was effected on the 4th of April. On the 5th and 6th, the accused underwent a treble examination before a tribunal composed of ecclesiastics and laymen, where he gave replies utterly contrary to the truth, and was at last convicted by means of his own handwriting, which he could not deny. The judges were disposed to proceed with rigour against him, when he found means to escape from the prisons of the Palace of Vienne, on the 7th of April, owing, no doubt, to his numerous friends. The trial was, nevertheless, continued against him as an outlaw; and on the 17th of June, a sentence, condemning him to the flames, was returned by the ordinary tribunal of the Bailiwick of Vienne. On the same day his effigy, and a bale of copies of his book, were burned in the market-place, by the hands of the executioner.

During that time, Servetus lay concealed in the French territory, where he remained about three months after his escape; but fearing, if he prolonged his stay in France, that he might fall into the hands of justice, he resolved to flee from a hostile country, and taking (strangely) the highway that led to the city where CALVIN dwelt, he reached Geneva towards the end of the month of July.*

* Rilliet here defers his explanation of the motives which guided Servetus in this, till he should publish his life of the heretic.—TR.

CHAPTER III.

SERVETUS AT GENEVA—THE STATE OF PARTIES THERE.

When Servetus entered Geneva, eighteen years had rolled away from the day on which the Reformation had been solemnly inaugurated there, and twelve since Calvin, recalled from his brief exile, had begun to preside over its Church, its morals, and its faith.

Political interests had exerted much influence in that revolution, which, overthrowing the Popish beliefs and the Episcopal sovereignty at Geneva, had replaced them by the Reformation and by liberty. The pursuit of the latter engrossed the citizens long before they had heard of the new doctrines; and, when these were preached, they were hailed chiefly as a means of definitively freeing Geneva from the supremacy of its bishops, and of securing for it the protection of Berne. Without doubt there existed, in the depths of many minds, religious wants which had sought, in the teaching of the new preachers, a nourishment which they looked for in vain from the degenerate institutions of the Church of Rome. But it was very soon discovered that the love of independence, yet more than enlightened convictions and seri-

ous belief, had been the moving power of the majority of the Genevese, become, by character and political convenience, the zealous partisans of a religious emancipation. In destroying by the roots their spiritual relation to their ancient ecclesiastical superior, their anti-Catholic beliefs formed an invincible obstacle to the return of the temporal power of the bishop;* and it was this guarantee of independence which mainly endeared the Reformation to their hearts. For them, it was the means—Geneva was the end; at heart, they were devoted to their country more than to the Gospel.

Habituated, besides, to a life of licentiousness, of dissipation, and pleasure, to which Catholic Geneva gave free scope, the emancipated citizens did not pretend to renounce these memorials of the past, and alter their manners when they changed their constitution. According to them, the same religion which had assisted in consolidating their political emancipation, should partake of the privileges of freedom. They wished religion well reformed; but they did not desire its restraints. As soon as it assumed this latter character—when it came down, all saturated with rigorism and severe exactions, into the region of practice—when it imposed, without any respect of persons, the strict observation of unforeseen and difficult duties, men saw the illusions vanish which, perhaps, owed their origin to the fact that the faith of

* Prior to the Reformation, the Bishop of Geneva was its Lord Paramount, invested with much of the authority and power of a temporal prince.—Tr.

the new converts was not a matter of experience. The exile of Calvin was the result of that difference between the principles which he wished to render prevalent, and the independence which a goodly number of the Genevese did not design to forego. Recalled under more favourable circumstances, he very soon experienced again the same opposition, which had been calmed for a little, but which was too natural to man long to disappear. Calvin seems to allude to this when he says, at a subsequent period: "Many, to whom the first look of pure and sound doctrine was welcome, were, in course of time, offended when they met it. Few were found to bend the neck to carry with pleasure the yoke of Jesus Christ."*

This yoke, such as the Reformer had fashioned it, when he made a rigid discipline the condition of his return to Geneva, found, in fact, in the majority of the citizens, a stiff-necked people. From that there arose a struggle between them and Calvin, of which the varied incidents rendered more and more clear the utter dissonance of disposition that separated the French Reformer from the Genevese patriots. The character of the master, all stamped with an austerity that was almost Stoical, and with an inflexible devotion to the very first principles (the logic) of duty, formed an irreconcilable contrast with the gay manners, the easy life, the worldliness of his disciples. He clothed everything in dark colours—they took existence by its joyous side. They were undisciplined and foolish children called to be the docile pupils of

* *Declaration*, p. 1326.

a rigid mentor. Between them sympathy was not natural, and it was not produced.

In addition to the difference of character, there was that of position. The Reformation had appeared as an accident amid the political struggles long maintained by the Genevese, and the majority had received it as a weapon in the combat; but it inspired them with no ardent and profound convictions. For Calvin, again, the Reformation was the object of his choice, the design of his labours, and the terminating point of his endeavours—it was his life. The interests of religion in his soul culminated high above every other; his faith occasioned all his patriotism, since for it he had preferred a land of exile to his home. A stranger to the struggles carried on by the children of Geneva for the conquest of their liberty, he did not come to enjoy along with them the victory, but to profit by it. He felt bound, at all costs, to render them faithful subjects of Jesus Christ — to make their city the sanctuary of the Gospel—their manners the type of the Reformation.*

Calvin undertook this work, or rather this war. What the founders of religious orders had attempted for monks cloistered in monasteries, Calvin was bold enough to attempt for a corrupt and a free city; he imposed a rule upon the inhabitants of Geneva, and he caused it to be observed. He counted in the Government many members favourable to his views, and depended, besides, upon those among the people who

* These sentences contain the *rationale* of Calvin's conduct, and explain to a Christian why he has been so signally maligned.—Tr.

had devoutly received his doctrine, as well as upon the strangers, daily increasing in number, who fled to Geneva on account of their religion. He found submissive subjects among them, and an useful instrument in the Consistory—charged to watch over the life and the faith of the flock.

¶ But the disciplinarian institutions by which he endeavoured to reform men's morals and bridle their licentiousness—the ecclesiastical laws designed to regulate, even in the smallest details, the creed and the conduct of the citizens, quite naturally provoked a keen opposition, and a prolonged resistance from many. Calvin finished by reigning, but it was by right of conquest. At the close of the struggle, Geneva contained a greater number of Calvinists, and some fewer Genevese. It is true that in losing them she received in exchange what, in modern times, has constituted her only renown and glory. But this new delivery of Geneva was laborious and uncertain. For many years the anti-Calvinist party, who reckoned in their ranks the members of many influential families and a considerable portion of the population, saw his successes increasing; and it was precisely at the moment when the position of the Reformer was most critical, because he saw the favour which he had long enjoyed with the body politic from day to day decreasing, that Servetus entered the walls of Geneva. The year 1553, says Beza,* was, by the impatient fury of the factious, full of such heavy troubles, that not merely the Church, but also the Republic, was very near its

moral climate pre-Servetus

* *Vie de Calvin*, under this year.

ruin—all having fallen into the hands of the unprincipled men, one might have believed that they were about to accomplish their long concerted projects.*

At the head of the Republic, and of "the unprincipled," there was at that time one who had become as decided an adversary to Calvin as he had formerly been a friend. This was Amied Perrin, Chief Syndic, and Captain-general. As a zealous partisan of reform, he had showed himself one of the most ardent promoters of Calvin's recall in 1541; and during some years thereafter they had moved forward in harmony. The brilliant position in the Republic, which fortune, alliances, popularity, and talent secured to Perrin, appeared to himself to demand the support of Calvin as its compliment and guarantee. He saw in the Reformer, if not an instrument, at least an ally, whom he could not neglect with impunity. But this alliance could not be of long duration; for an equal desire to rule animated both, and could not fail to divide them.† The friend of pageantry and pleasure, and seized with the ambition to rule the Republic alone, Perrin designed to retain his loose behaviour, while he hoped to find in the friendship of the Reformer a pledge of success and of impunity. Like others, he

* We have already noticed that in all the past estimates of the affair of Servetus, this has been overlooked, or not sufficiently considered. One chief merit of Rilliet's brochure is, that he gives it the prominence that is due to it.—Tr.

† We would not for an instant compare Calvin and Perrin, in reference to that lust of power mentioned in the text. The Reformer's passion was for purity in men; Perrin's, that he might have tools and minions. Even the remarks of Rilliet point out this distinction.—Tr.

favoured the rigour of Calvin, because he believed himself personally sheltered from it.

But the Reformer had no taste for such finesse; in his eyes everything must give way rather than principle; and when the occasion was presented, he did not hesitate to add the Chief Syndic to the other enemies whom his rigorism and his inflexibility had already procured him. The father-in-law and the wife of Perrin, being guilty of a delinquency forbidden by the new ecclesiastical canons, were, at the instance of Calvin, condemned by the Consistory, and punished by the Council (1546). "That condemnation," said the Reformer himself, "had the effect of making it publicly known, on the one hand, that there was now no longer any hope of escaping from correction, since even the first in the city were not spared: and, on the other, that I have no other treatment for my friends than for my enemies." By this notable stroke, Calvin at once demonstrated his power and measured his forces—the interest and the future success of his work were of much more importance to him than the favour of Perrin. Wounded in his self-esteem and in his affections, the rage of the magistrate was extreme; and from that day there followed between the Reformer and him, amid some precarious adjustments, a war of extermination, where Calvin was conqueror only in consequence of the final expulsion of Perrin and the chiefs of his party. By a singular freak of fortune, those who had expelled the priests were, for the most part, banished by the ministers.

But at the period which now occupies our attention the Chief Syndic triumphed. As the leader of the anti-Calvinist opposition in the Councils, and at the head of numerous and active dependants, he profited by his political influence to thwart his rival. In addition, the Government was recruited that very year by some of the principal opponents of the Reformer, who had entered the Little Council after a reaction, where the Calvinist party, still not very numerous among the citizens, had received one of its severest checks.* A party of the Reformer's adherents, who sat in the Little Council, had been excluded by the Council of Two hundred and the Council-general.†

* Rilliet here gives a note from the *Croniques* of Roset, which seems to contradict his own statements.—Tr.

† As we have frequent occasion to refer to the courts, civil and municipal, which existed at Geneva in Calvin's day, the following account may explain their constitution and operation. The sovereign power was vested in a series of three Councils:—*First*, The General Council, composed of all such citizens and burgesses as had reached the age of twenty-five years. *Secondly*, The Council of Two hundred, which consisted of two hundred and fifty citizens or burgesses, and had its vacancies filled up as soon as they amounted to fifty. The members were required to be thirty years complete, and held office for life, unless they became bankrupt, or were degraded at a censure annually passed. This Council generally met on the first Monday of every month. *Thirdly*, The Council of Twenty-five. Its members were chosen from the Council of Two-hundred, and were subject to the same scrutiny as the larger court. The syndics or magistrates were selected annually from the Council of Twenty-five, and were first chosen in the city about the year 1090. They continued in office for a year, and were not re-eligible for four. For a sketch of these courts, and their several functions, see *Keate's Account of Geneva*, p. 66, *et seq.*; *Sennebier*, *Hist. Liter. de Geneve*, vol. i., p. 34, *et seq.*—Tr.

The majority of the citizens had thus openly taken part against the Reformer, all the more that the newly elected councillors * were either kinsmen of the Captain-general, or of a family with which Calvin and the Consistory were then engaged in a personal quarrel, regarding a prohibition against one of its members, to present the children for baptism. To choose magistrates from these families was to declare against Calvin without disguise, and to blazon an opposition which had been hitherto secretly active. He felt it deeply, and his letters make us believe that his soul was filled with bitterness.

To this party blow there had speedily succeeded a decision more hostile still to the interests of Calvin's cause and of his friends. The greater part of these, we have said, were found in the ranks of the stranger population, refugees at Geneva for the sake of religion, and who, on that account, were the more ardent in maintaining the Calvinist discipline in all its rigour —the reverse of the native Genevese, who, we repeat, being Protestants, for the most part, only because they had ceased to be Catholics, saw in Reform, not so much a change of private morals as of ecclesiastical abuses—and, in consequence, resisted the discipline by which Calvin sought to regulate or bridle their spirits. The Genevese party had triumphed over the citizens attached to the Reformer, in the election which took place in the Council-general. It wished to weaken still more the French party, upon which

* They were Pernet Desfosses, Gaspard Favre, Claude Vandel, and Baptist Sept.

Calvin depended, and which, being composed of strangers,* did not enjoy political rights in Geneva. These aliens, however, had received arms during the previous year, to aid in maintaining the public safety; and that act testified the confidence and esteem with which they had inspired the magistrates. It was to testify the very contrary, and thus to lower their influence and that of Calvin, that it was now decided to withdraw their arms—in fact, to disarm them.

The proceedings adopted towards them in these circumstances, deeply wounded the Reformer, who felt himself attacked in their persons. "It is useless," he subsequently exclaimed, "to describe the inhumanity, the barbarity, and the brutality, with which the enemies of the Gospel have treated the exiles of Christ, whom they had received as co-religionists. The calmness, the moderation, and the patience, which the latter have displayed amid all these indignities, will be attested even by the authors of the injuries." The last mark of hostility to the Calvinist party was prohibiting the ministers from continuing to sit, like the other citizens, in the Council-general, and their assimilation, in that respect, to the priests before the Reformation. Though insignificant in its political consequences, this measure, adopted at the commencement of the year, betrayed still further the animosity and distrust of which the chiefs of the Church were the objects.

If to these symptoms, in some measure official, we

* They comprehend under the name of *French* all kinds of strangers.—*Bonnivard.*

add the complaints of every kind, of which Calvin and his colleagues were the frequent occasion, and which the registers of the Council attest, we shall understand that his influence in Geneva was not at this period well consolidated, nor his power so unchallenged as some imagine. To be convinced of this, it is enough to hear himself: "For four years"—he wrote at the close of the year 1553—"the factious have done all to lead, by degrees, to the overthrow of this Church, already very weak. From the beginning I understood their machinations. But God has wished to punish — not being able to correct us. Behold, two years of our life have passed, as if we lived among the avowed enemies of the Gospel."

Among the incidents most likely, sooner or later, to occasion a violent collision between the Reformer and the party opposed to him, we find in the very front the interdict from partaking of the Lord's supper pronounced against one of the leading members of the Libertine party—Philibert Berthelier. This sentence, passed by the Consistory at the instigation of Calvin, was one of the strongest incentives to the opposition against him; and must necessarily become the occasion of a struggle between him and his opponents. In effect, the adversaries of the Reformer not merely wished the civil power to cancel the sentence of excommunication pronounced against Berthelier, but, moreover, desired to profit by the circumstance—to withdraw from the Consistory, and transfer to the Little Council, the right of refusing the holy supper

to the citizens.* The composition of the latter body, and the Syndicate of Amied Perrin, rendered the occurrence favourable to their views. But such designs roused the indignation of Calvin, who saw in their realization the severest check that could be given to his disciplinarian institutions, without which he did not believe that he could maintain the Reformation in Geneva. Yet such was the power of his antagonists, that, in spite of all his efforts, their plans were crowned with success before the close of the year.†

These ecclesiastical discussions occurring during the trial now to be described, will hereafter occupy our attention. We have spoken of them now, because Calvin himself has told us, that among the allies of Berthelier, Servetus found his chief patrons and sup-

* This sentence is a key to explain many of the struggles in which Calvin was engaged. Rilliet, arguing upon the principles which regulate worldly minds and worldly politicians, refers to Calvin's "rigour," and "austerity," and "Stoicism." The Christian will see deeper into the matter, and at once detect that Calvin's controversy is that which began between Cain and Abel, which has been carried on through all this world's history, which the Redeemer himself had to engage in, and from which all who would follow the Lord fully must learn not to shrink—the controversy between holiness and sin—between Christ and Cæsar—between God and the hearts that are "enmity against him." Had Calvin just favoured Perrin in what Rilliet calls his "love of pageantry and pleasure," the Reformer would have met with no opposition.—Tr.

† It will be seen that Rilliet here traces Calvin's opposition only to his desire to maintain discipline and the Reformation. It does not appear that he understood Calvin's principle — for which he was willing to contend to the death—that the civil cannot sinlessly trench upon the spiritual.—Tr.

porters,* while it was necessary to describe the position which Perrin and his adherents, mentioned under the name of *Libertines*, held in Geneva, because their hostility to the Reformer, enabling Servetus to meet such powerful allies at the side of his redoubtable opponent, probably drew him to Geneva, and turned his trial into an episode in the struggle which distracted the republican city.

* Epist. Calv. ad Min. Tigur., 26 Novemb. 1553.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARREST OF SERVETUS—FIRST JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HIM.

On arriving at Geneva, Servetus alighted at the inn of *the Rose*, and there, according to his own declaration, kept himself carefully concealed, that he might not be recognised, waiting an opportunity to procure a boat to proceed by the lake to Zurich, and thence to the kingdom of Naples.* But notwithstanding of this assertion, it is probable that in the inn where he preserved his incognito, he was not without some communication with those in the city. Certain it is, that in spite of the precautions which he had taken, or rather because he did not remain so completely secluded as he pretends, his presence in Geneva was discovered, the alarm was given, and himself identified. If we may believe a cotemporary narrative,† he had taken a fancy to be present at a sermon preached in one of the churches, and it was there he was discovered, and denounced even before the sermon was

* Examination of August 23, No. 28.

† Historia de Morte Serveti, in *Mosheim*, p. 448.

concluded. It is certain that they were members of the ministerial body who established his identity, and that his arrest took place on the Lord's-day, 13th of August, 1553.*

* The following extracts, translated from the Registers of the Company of Pastors in Geneva, concerning Servetus, indicate their part at this stage of the proceedings :—

"The 13th of August, year aforesaid.—M. Servetus having been recognised by some brethren, it was found good to cause him to be imprisoned, to the end he might not further infect the world (or people) with his blasphemies and heresies; for that he is known (to be) wholly incorrigible and desperate. Upon that, there was one who was made criminal party (accuser) against him; the which proposed certain articles, containing a selection of the most notable errors of said Servetus. Some days after, it was commanded by the Council that we should be present when they examined him; the which being done, his impudence and obstinacy were more and more discovered and known; because he maintained, for a principle, that the name of Trinity had not been in use but since the Council of Nice, and that all the doctors and martyrs before had not known what it was. But when one produced quite evident testimonies, as well from Justin Martyr as from Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, and others, so far was he from being ashamed, that he broke out into all absurdities, with injuries and outrages. At last, my Lords seeing that the procedure would be endless if means were not found to shorten it, commanded that an extract should be made of the erroneous and heretical propositions contained in his books, and that he having replied by writing, we should show in brief the falsity of his opinions, with the purpose of sending the whole to the neighbouring Churches to have their advice." (Then follow the parts of the discussion written in Latin, which are printed in Calvin's *Tractatus Theologici*.)

"All the deportment of the said Servetus, as it is written above, has been sent by my Lords to the Churches of Berne, Basle, Zurich, and Chafouse, for having their advice thereupon.

"Friday, the 27th day of October.—My Lords having received the advice of the Churches of Berne, Basle, Zurich, and Chafouse, touching the conduct of Servetus, condemned the said Servetus to

Calvin was the instigator. The instant he was informed by his colleagues of the discovery which they had made, in consequence, no doubt, of instructions formerly received, he applied to one of the Syndics to obtain from him the imprisonment of Servetus, in virtue of the power attached to his office by the Criminal Edicts.* The magistrate immediately granted the request, and Calvin never dissembled the part which he took in the imprisonment of the heretic. "I do not wish to deny," he said, "that it was on my suit that he was made prisoner."† This move of the Reformer was perfectly natural, after he had been informed of the presence of Servetus in his domain. Under pain of abdication, he must do everything rather than suffer by his side in Geneva a man whom he considered the greatest enemy of the Reformation; and the critical position in which he saw it, in the bosom of the Republic, was one motive more to remove, if it was possible, the new element of dissolution which the free sojourn of Servetus would have created.

In Calvin's situation, and as he was placed, he could not hesitate upon the part which he ought to take. No doubt, in undertaking a new affair, he

be led to Champey, and there to be burned alive; which was done without the said Servetus at his death having given any indication of repentance for his errors."

* "When any complaint shall come, let each one of the Syndics have power to call those to whom it appertains, and cause imprison, if it is meet."—*Criminal Edicts of January* 28, 1543. As to Calvin's part, see *Epist. Calv. ad Sulzerum*, September 9, 1553.

† *Declaration*, p. 1318.

complicated the difficulties of his position, but that could not repress his inflexible spirit. Born for rule and for contest, he must always incur the risk of the latter for the sake of the former.* A check in the pursuit of Servetus was not to him, after all, more fatal than that which he would have received had he not dared to employ against the Spaniard the repressive means which he had before adopted to accomplish his objects with adversaries less formidable, or heretics less odious.

Calvin, we know from his letter to Viret, had long held Servetus to be an impious and pernicious blasphemer, whose opinions distilled the most deadly poison into the bosom of Christendom. This conviction, deepened by the irritation which the attacks of the heretic had occasioned, could not leave him an instant undecided as to the part which he should take. To tolerate Servetus with impunity at Geneva, would have been, in some measure, for Calvin to exile himself; it would have been to betray the cause of God without a struggle—to belie all the past, and render impossible the continuation of his work in Geneva, the rival of Rome. The path on which Calvin had entered left him, therefore, no alternative between toleration and persecution. The man whom

* Rilliet here again makes it all too plain that he either did not know, or did not sufficiently estimate, the power of religious principle in Calvin's mind. Beyond all question, his ruling motive was neither the lust of power nor the love of strife; it was religious belief—right or wrong in its application, but deriving its power to impel, from the conviction that it was belief in what Jehovah had said or commanded.—Tr.

a Calvinist accusation had caused to be arrested, tried, and condemned to the flames in France, could not find an asylum in the city from which that accusation had issued. The honour of Reform, as Calvin understood it, was pledged to that, and never, without doubt, did he believe he was performing a work more in unison with the interests of a cause which he held so sacred, than when he determined to urge on the arrest of Servetus. The doctrines published by the latter appeared to the Reformer a complete overturning of the Christian structure, nay, even of all religion.* To tolerate their author, and not to punish him, had been to render himself partaker, in public opinion, of his horrible impiety. Besides, without taking into account what the enemies of the Calvinist faith might have thought, all deference towards Servetus on the part of Calvin, as we have already said, would have been a leniency not suggested by the system which he had up to that time pursued, with regard to theological opponents placed at his door.

In fact, not content with seeking to confute Servetus in discussion, Calvin solicited against him the interposition of the civil power—the magistrate being bound, according to him, to take cognizance of blasphemies and heresies as well as of murders and robberies, since crimes in matters of religion were not less important than in matters civil, nay, implied a culpability even greater than the latter, inasmuch as the soul, the object of their attack, is of more importance than the body and physical life. "Such

* *Declaration*, p. 1388.

a diversity is not found in Scripture," says he somewhere, "that one should estimate at a lower rate the injuries done to God than those which affect men."* Calvin did not comprehend, as men do now, the relation between the Church and the State; for, although he assigned to each a sphere of action perfectly distinct from that of the other, he, nevertheless, in the aggregate of social organization, admitted only of their mutual co-operation and their intimate union.† His whole system of ecclesiastical discipline is based on this double connection of divergence and of unity: in reference to heresy, we find the same opinion. The servant of the Church must denounce the heretic, and confute him theologically; but his condemnation is the exclusive function of the magistrate, one of whose most sacred duties is to punish attacks made on the Divine Majesty.

"It is most true," says Beza, "that when men were banded together against the doctrine of God which Calvin preached, he neglected nothing till he had caused the mockers of God to be treated as their demerits required, according to the holy laws which are here in force." "But," adds the biographer, "he

* *Declaration*, p. 1321.

† Rilliet here refers to the ecclesiastical *Ordonnances* of the city of Geneva issued in 1561. But Calvin's own conduct might have showed him that the sweeping assertion in the text is not in accordance with fact. Calvin did struggle, and offered to die, rather than let the civil interfere with the spiritual. The opinion of his age reared him in the conviction, and kept him under the belief, that it was not a spiritual, but a *civil* thing, to repress heresy by the sword. —Tr.

never judged any one, for that was not his office, and he never thought of doing it; and if his advice was asked, that was not to confound the offices which God had distinguished, but to be regulated according to the Word of the Lord."*

The authority of that Word was not associated in the mind of the Reformer with the theory of free inquiry, as it has been since proclaimed. In questions of faith, he did not at all admit of selection or independence, but tolerated only the reign of absolute truth, and, by consequence, unity of doctrine. Liberty, according to Calvin, was emancipation from error and submission to the truth, not promiscuousness of opinion.†

"I reject," said he, in arguing against the partisans of toleration, "their favourite maxim, that we must suffer all kinds of disputes, because there is nothing certain or definite, but the Scripture is a *nasus cerae*, so that the faith which all Christians hold concerning the Trinity, predestination, justification by free grace, are things indifferent, regarding which men may contend at pleasure."‡ Then, return-

* Discours sur la Vie et Mort de Mr Johan Calvin.

† Rilliet means to say, that Calvin's view of Christian liberty was not such as to lead him to regard all religious opinions as equally sound, if sincerely held. He rejected that opinion as subversive of truth, and thus expressed himself on the subject: "Cum enim furta, cœdes, rapinae severissime plectantur, quia ad homines injuria pertineat, connivetur interea ad scortationes, adulteria, ebriositates, blasphemias nominis Dei tanquam ad res licitas, aut non ita graviter vindicandas. Atqui Deus longe aliter iis de rebus pronuntiat."—*Calvin to Sommerset.* See his Collected Letters.—TR.

‡ Letter of February 20, 1555, in *Henry*, II., Beil., No. 2. (We

ing elsewhere to the same subject: "What will become of God and of Jesus Christ," said he, "if the doctrine is so uncertain and dubious? And what opprobrium is offered to God by saying that he has made his language in Scripture so tortuous that it is calculated only to mock men, and befool them? But, if we have not a certain and definite religion in the Holy Scriptures, it will follow from that, that God has wished us to be occupied with one knows not how many fallacies, as if he spoke to us of fooleries. What remains for such people but to annihilate the Holy Scripture, that they may have a shorter way to imagine all that enters their head? At all events, one clearly perceives that all mockers of God, and all the rebellious against him, in denying that princes and magistrates should maintain *the true religion* by the sword, are pleading their own particular cause."*

apprehend that in these few sentences the essence of the question regarding toleration, as viewed by the Reformers, will be found. They were afraid, amid the conflict of opinion which then prevailed, to let go, or seem to let go, the one unchallengeable standard—the Word of God. They held that it spoke with no uncertain sound upon the great doctrines which embody the mind of God regarding the souls of men, and could be parties to no transaction, or could abet no tenets which proceeded on the supposition that God's Word was not definite in its meaning, as well as authoritatively binding upon all that held it. The error, or rather the excess of Calvin's system, lay in admitting man's coercive power into the sphere where He alone presides who said: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." —Tr.)

* *Declaration*, p. 1321. (In these sentences Calvin has said nearly all that even he could say for his cause; and it is needless to add extracts from other parts of his works, though they exist in abundance. He was right in pleading for the certainty and the definite conviction

Calvin believed that he was pleading the cause of God and of the Gospel (which he confounded with his own), and, by consequence, fulfilling an imperative duty, in delivering Servetus to the secular arm; but he had neglected to beware of "confounding the offices which God has distinguished," when he mixed himself up with the heretic's condemnation. "From the time he was convicted of his heresies," said Calvin, "I have made no endeavour to have his punishment made capital; and not merely all honest men will be witnesses of what I say, but I challenge all the malignants to say if it is not so." * In urging on the arrestment of Servetus, Calvin was satisfied with hoping that the sentence would be capital; but he afterwards desired to mitigate the horrors of his punishment.†

The hope of Calvin was not disappointed, although its realization was not so prompt as he had perhaps desired. It must even have appeared to him doubtful oftener than once during the two months which

of their truth which the Scriptures bring to the soul of a believer. (1 John v. 19.) That was one of the points which the Reformers were called on to maintain at once against practical unbelievers among Protestants and the "doubtsome faith" of Rome; and in maintaining it they had Scripture for their full and unequivocal warrant. See John vii. 17, compared with Ps. xxv. 14; Rom. viii. 16, 38. But the Reformers erred by excess, when, from defending the self-evidencing power of Scripture, they claimed for *man* the right, or laid on him the obligation, to punish those who did not thus see light in God's light.—TR.)

* *Declaration*, p. 1318.

† Epist. Calv. ad Farellum, 20 August, 1553: "Spero capitale saltem judicium fore; pœnæ vero atrocitatem remitti cupio."

rolled away before pronouncing and executing the sentence of death. Indeed, even to the last moment, some might continue uncertain as to the closing scene of the tragedy, because the state of parties in Geneva transformed the affair of Servetus, as we have already seen, into a new episode in the struggle in which Calvin was engaged. Defeated upon other points, he would probably have received a similar check upon this, if his opinion had not been supported by foreign authorities, and if the Council of Geneva, which would have resisted the Reformer, had not yielded to the Churches of Switzerland and the Government of Berne.

In the meantime, Servetus had crossed the threshold of the ancient residence of the bishops of Geneva, transformed, after their expulsion, into an abode for prisoners; and in ordering his temporary arrestment, the Lord Syndic had only performed his duty. But that the prisoner might not be immediately released for want of charges against him, the judge was bound to institute a criminal accusation; and, with that design, to observe the formalities required by the Edicts. These appointed that, in every accusation implying corporeal punishment, the accuser must become a prisoner along with the accused, in order that, in the event of the charge proving false, the former might undergo the punishment to which the guilty was exposed.* Calvin could not shut himself up in

* "Let the Lieutenant have power of imprisoning, at the request of every one who will make himself a formal party against another, by becoming a prisoner along with him."—*Edict of 12th*

a jail with Servetus, but intrusted it to the care of another to become his accuser; and this he never conceals. On the contrary, he says: "I do not dissemble that it was by my advice that he was apprehended in this city, to render an account of his evil deeds. Let the malevolent or the slanderous babble against me as much as they please, it is as I frankly declare—as, according to the laws and customs of the city, no one could be imprisoned for a crime without a party to accuse, or without information previously lodged, to bring such a man to reason, I took measures to obtain a party to accuse him." *

The person employed to become in this manner a "criminal party," against the Spaniard, was a disciple of the Reformer, a Frenchman, named Nicolas de la Fontaine, and employed, it would appear, as Calvin's private secretary. It should be remarked, that in this trial, with which the name of Geneva is now for ever connected, the accused as well as the accusers were foreigners.

When Servetus was imprisoned by order of the Syndic, the Lord-Lieutenant, Pierre Tissot, was informed, according to the Edicts.† On the same day,

Nov. 1542. "*Item.*—That in a case demanding corporeal punishment, if a party pursue, the said party pursuing must become a prisoner himself, and subject himself *ad pœnam tallionis*, &c., according to the text of our Franchises."—*Ordonnances* of 1529, No. 8. (We have, in the fact that the Reformers gave obedience to this law another proof of their clear conviction that heresy deserved death.—Tr.)

* *Declaration*, p. 1337.

† "If they take a criminal, let them, within twenty-four hours,

it behoved him, in like manner, to receive the declaration by which Nicolas de la Fontaine became the accuser, and, in consequence, to issue a warrant for his imprisonment. De la Fontaine applied next day, Monday the 14th of August, to the Little Council, to ask justice against Servetus—as "a sower of great heresies."* He was enjoined to give in, "in writing, to the Lord-Lieutenant, the errors and passages which he says bear against him, so that Servetus may reply, to be further pursued." In conformity with this decision of the Council, and with the duties of his office, which obliged him to examine every prisoner within the first twenty-four hours,† Pierre Tissot went after noon to the bishops' palace, where the two prisoners were, and then, following step by step the articles of the complaint by De la Fontaine, remitted to him by order of the Little Council, and consisting of thirty-eight articles, drawn up by Calvin,‡

issue an order to the Lieutenant, to make him answer upon the points on which he has been accused."—*Edicts of 28th Jan.*, 1543.

* "Upon the application of Nicolas de la Fontaine against the said Servetus, prisoner, bearing that he is a sower of great heresies, and for these already imprisoned, and a fugitive; and inasmuch as he, having become party against him, has supplicated justice—it is resolved that they give in writing to the Lord-Lieutenant the errors and passages which they profess to prove against him, to the end that he may reply, to be further pursued.—*Extract from the Registers of the Little Council, dated 14th Aug.* 1553.

† "When the Syndics have informed the Lieutenant that they have taken one accused, let him be examined within twenty-four hours."—*Edicts of 12th Nov.* 1542.

‡ It is Calvin himself who informs us that he prepared them.—*Declaration*, p. 1337. In his letter to Farel, 20th August 1553, Calvin says, that the deed of accusation consisted of forty articles;

he questioned the accused upon the different points mentioned in the deed in succession.* De la Fontaine (or rather Calvin) requested that Servetus might be first examined upon some facts relative to his previous life, and his publications, and we shall give, as a specimen of the procedure, the opening of the examination, as it is found in the minutes of the Court. This preliminary inquest, held by the Lieutenant, corresponds to that with which the "Judges of Instruction" are now charged:—

"The year 1553, and on Monday, the 14th day of the month of August, pursuant to the criminal action raised at the instance of the Hon. Nicolas de la Fontaine, of St Gervais au Vixen, a Frenchman, an inhabitant of this city, against M. Servetus of Villeneuve, in the kingdom of Arragon, in Spain—The said De la Fontaine requests that the said Servetus should reply to the questions written below, declaring that he has raised the said criminal action, in his own proper and private name;—the which Servetus has sworn to speak and answer the truth, upon pain," &c.

"1. In the first place, that about twenty-four years ago, he began to trouble the Churches of Germany by his errors and heresies, and had been condemned and forced to flee, to escape the punishment that was prepared for him.

in fact, the paragraphs of the original schedule had been at first so numbered, but as two of them contained only directions for procedure, and not grounds of charge, they have been latterly withdrawn; and upon the authentic document, the double notation is found.

* See the Complaint at length, in Appendix, B.

"*Replies*—It is true that he has written a little book, but has not troubled the Churches, as far as he knows, and has never been condemned for it.

"2. *Item*—That at that time, or about it, he printed an execrable book, which has infected many people.

"*Replies*—Has composed [another] little book, but does not know that it has infected any person.

"3. *Item*—That since then he has not ceased, by all means in his power, to disseminate his poison, both by quotations which he has made concerning the Bible, and in some annotations which he has written upon Ptolemy.

"*Replies*—That he confesses to have made annotations upon Ptolemy and the Bible, but thinks he has done nothing but good by them.

"4. *Item*—That since that time he has privately printed another book, containing infinite blasphemies.

"*Replies*—That he has written another book, in which he does not think that he has blasphemed: but that if his accuser show him his blasphemies, he is ready to correct them.

"5. *Item*—That being kept prisoner in the city of Vienne, when he saw that he would not receive grace to recant, he found means to escape from prison.

"*Replies*—That it is true he was a prisoner at Vienne at the instance of M. Calvin and William Trie; but that he made his escape, because the priests desired to burn him—while the prison was kept as if they had wished him to save himself."

In this last answer we see Servetus retorting by an

indirect attack upon Calvin, to whom and William de Trie he imputes (with truth as regards the latter) his imprisonment at Vienne. He wishes by this simple trait to lessen the consideration of his opponent, and he seizes, at the commencement, the opportunity of beginning the battle by making himself in some measure the accuser of Calvin. These offensive tactics of Servetus, to which we shall see him again recurring, prove that he was not ignorant of the relative position of parties in Geneva, and that he did not despair of finding supporters in coping with the Reformer.

After the first five questions put by De la Fontaine, the indictment contained others regarding the doctrine of Servetus, accompanied with the following observation:—

"And inasmuch as he may equivocate, pretending that his blasphemies and heresies are only sound doctrine, the said Nicolas proposes certain articles, upon which he requires the said heretic to be examined.

"The said Nicolas desires that the said Servetus be constrained to reply as to the *fact* of the articles now lodged, without entering into dispute regarding the truth or falsehood of the doctrine; for that will be made plain hereafter."

The pursuing party thus wished to establish the point of fact, and to shut up his opponent within the strict limits of an affirmative or a negative reply. The articles, to the number of thirty-one, referred, in fact, to the principal assertions of Servetus reckoned heretical by the Genevese Reformer, and which were all cited, not according to the book printed at Vienne,

but according to the work in MS. sent to Calvin by Servetus some years before, which contained a sufficiently accurate sketch of the work thereafter published. As to the books upon the Trinity, printed at Haguenau in 1531 and 1532, and which would have served equally well as means of conviction, there does not appear any citation taken from them, in the whole course of the proceedings, because, it seems, the pursuers had not been able to procure them.*

Among the articles to which the Lord-Lieutenant behoved to make Servetus answer, the greater part had reference to the remarks which the latter had made upon the doctrine of the Trinity—some to the manner in which he conceived God to be connected with his creatures—others to the nature of the soul—others to the impeccability and baptism of infants.† Servetus being proved to hold certain of the opinions which were imputed to him, he denied some, explained away others, and equivocated regarding the rest. The endeavour of De la Fontaine, to limit him strictly to affirmation or negation, had not been crowned with success.

* Calvin had asked Viret, then at Lausanne, to supply this deficiency; and he replied, 22d August 1553: "Behold you, then, engaged in a new discussion with Servetus. We have not yet been able to procure the book which he published twenty years ago. Saunier will return to-day, I hope; and I think I have formerly seen a copy with him. If he still has it, he will not refuse it to us; and I shall put you in possession of it as early as possible." The two works on the Trinity are now the only productions of Servetus which the Library of Geneva possesses.

† See Appendix, B.

After the theological grievances came the personal: "*Item*—That, in the person of M. Calvin, minister of the Word of God in this Church of Geneva, he has defamed, in his printed book, the doctrine which is preached here, uttering all the injuries and blasphemies which it is possible to invent." Servetus replied that "M. Calvin had, before that time, injured him in many printed books; that he had answered him, showing that Calvin erred in some places; and that, when accused of writing like one intoxicated, he had retorted, and repeated that Calvin erred in very many passages."

The attack upon Calvin still appears in this—it manifests itself in the bitter terms employed, and proves that Servetus thought himself strong enough not to finesse with his opponent.

The last question in the examination referred to the printing of Servetus' book at Vienne. It had been superintended by a Genevese, named William Gueroult, who belonged to the Libertine party, and had been banished from Geneva two years before, whither he had recently returned. Gueroult, who was known to have been employed as a corrector of the press in the office in which the work was printed, denied all share in its correction; while Servetus affirmed the contrary—and he then spoke the truth. But the next day, being better advised, and having probably been privately informed that this confession might injure both himself and Gueroult, by establishing the connection that subsisted between them, Servetus denied what he had said the evening

before, and affirmed, like the corrector himself, that no connection had ever existed between them at Vienne: he maintained this assertion to the last.*

The examination being over, De la Fontaine asked leave to refute the denials of Servetus, by producing passages contained in works of his composing. He presented, in consequence, two of his writings—of which the one was the *Christianismi Restitutio*, printed at Vienne; the other, the work in manuscript to which the citations contained in the indictment referred, and which Servetus acknowledged to be his; adding, that he had sent it "to M. Calvin about six years before, to obtain his opinion regarding it." Finally, there was presented to Servetus an edition of the Geography of Ptolemy, and a Latin Bible—each containing annotations of which he confessed he was the author.

After this, "the said Fontaine and the said Servetus were committed as criminals to John Grasset, the keeper of the prison, to be detained, under pain of death. And the said Servetus has declared that he has intrusted to the said Grasset ninety-seven crowns, a chain of gold weighing about twenty crowns, and also six gold rings." This silver, and these trinkets, which consisted of "a large torquoise, a white sapphire, a diamond, a ruby, a large emerald of

* There exists incontestible documentary evidence that in this denial, Servetus stated what he knew to be untrue; and this discovery is damaging to one who professed to be maintaining a high religious cause. The evidence referred to will be seen at a subsequent part of this volume.—Tr.

Peru, and a signet ring of coralline,"* were afterwards deposited in the hands of Pierre Tissot, who rendered an exact account of them when the process was concluded.

The inquest of the Lord-Lieutenant being completed, it devolved on him, according to the duties of his office, to communicate the result to the Syndics, constituted by the Edicts judges in causes criminal.† He therefore transmitted to them the next day (15th August), in Council, an abstract of the examination, and desired that the accused might be put upon his trial, as his office gave Tissot power to do;‡ or rather, as the process was raised by a pursuing party, the Lieutenant concluded that the pursuer should be authorized to persevere in the suit. On his side, Nicolas de la Fontaine presented a petition, which we shall transcribe entire, because it exhibits very exactly the grievances charged against Servetus, and the direction which the procedure was likely to take.

"In your presence, Magnificent, Powerful, and most Redoubtable Lords, Nicolas de la Fontaine declares that he has been constituted prisoner in a criminal prosecution against M. Servetus, for the grave scandals and troubles which the said Servetus has already occasioned in Christendom for the space of

* Registers of the Council, October 30, 1553.

† Que lesdits Sindicques soient juges de toutes causes criminelles, estant toutefoys accompaignés du conseil."—*Edicts of 28th January*, 1543.

‡ Si le delinquant se trouve criminel sans alcune difficulté, et quil (le Lieutenant) le rende pour tel quil ayt a justifier a lencontre pour fère expedier le proces."—*Edicts of 12th November*, 1542.

twenty-four years, or thereby; for the blasphemies which he has spoken and written against God; for the heresies with which he has infected the world; for the wicked calumnies and false defamations which he has published against the true servants of God, and especially against Mr. Calvin, whose honour the said *Proposant* is bound to maintain as that of his pastor, if he would be reckoned a Christian; and also on account of the blame and the dishonour which might accrue to the Church of Geneva, seeing that the said Servetus specially condemns the doctrine which is preached there.

"And inasmuch as the said Servetus was examined yesterday, and did not answer to the purpose, but, instead of replying pertinently by Yes or No, stated what he pleased, so that the greater part of his answers appear like frivolous stories, may it please you to constrain him to reply formally upon each article without digressions, that he may no more mock God and your Lordships, and also that the said *Proposant* be not frustrated of his right.

"And when the said *Proposant* shall have verified his charge, so that the said Servetus shall be proved to have written and taught the heresies contained in the Interrogatories, the said *Proposant* humbly supplicates, that if you judge the said Servetus to be guilty, and deserving to be prosecuted by your Procurator-Fiscal, it may please you to emit a declaration to that effect, and entirely free the said *Proposant* from all expense, injury, and risk; not because he shuns or refuses to prosecute such a cause and quarrel,

which all Christians and children of God ought to maintain even unto death, but because he understands that the usages and customs of your city warrant that, and because it belongs not to him to undertake the duty and office of another."

After taking cognizance of this petition, and the findings of the Lieutenant, the Council resolved, that on the afternoon of the same day, they should proceed to the bishops' palace, there to commence proceedings, according to the usual forms. Accompanied, then, according to usage,* by the herald, Aymé des Arts, and some of the citizens named "to assist in criminal processes, along with the Little Council,† and also by the Lieutenant, who, in terms of the Edicts, behoved to be present in all criminal affairs as "attorney for the public," their Lordships proceeded to the hall of the ancient Episcopal Palace, where they held their criminal courts, and there summoned Servetus and Fontaine before them.

The latter being asked "if he wished to persist in the suit raised by him against M. Servetus of Arragon, answered, that he did." The Court thereupon proceeded to examine Servetus, who "being personally present, and having taken the oath to speak the truth under pain of sixty *sous*, and of having the case held as confessed, was interrogated whence he came, and

* "Que le Sautier accompagne les Sindicques en tous actes de Justice."—*Edicts of* 1543.

† Every year there were chosen in the Council of Sixty, and of Two Hundred, nine citizens, who had the right to sit in criminal processes, but did not take part in the judgment.

replied that he was a Spaniard, an Arragonese of Villeneuve, and a physician, by name M. Servetus." They then repeated all the questions which had already been put on the previous evening by the Lord-Lieutenant; and the prisoner replied to the chief nearly in the same terms as before, but still more keenly accusing Calvin, and Calvin alone, of having caused the prosecution at Vienne; "so that it is not owing to Calvin, as Servetus says, that the prisoner has not been burned alive."

Regarding all that concerns the Trinity, the nature of Jesus Christ, the connection between the essence of God and created beings, Servetus held the same language—he denied, as at first, that he had taught that the soul is mortal, but confessed having written that man does not commit mortal sin till the age of twenty; adding, that "in the law of God it is thus decided." He also acknowledged, that in his eyes "the baptism of little infants is a diabolical invention—an infernal falsehood to destroy the whole of Christianity;" declaring of the other points, "that if he had erred, he was ready to correct himself." Finally, as to his attacks against the Church of Geneva in the person of Calvin, he replied as at first, adding, that "what he had formerly written against Calvin in his own defence, had not been with the intention of injuring, but to show him his errors and his faults, which he undertook to demonstrate in full congregation, by divers reasons, and authorities of the Holy Scriptures."

This was to challenge Calvin, and offer him battle

on a field which he could not decline, since he also admitted no other judge of that field but the Word of God. This step on the part of Servetus was a bold one, and can be explained only by his hope of finding in the contest an opportunity of measuring himself with advantage against his opponent, before a public hostile to the latter, and thus to change his position of accused into that of assailant. A public debate would have given importance to the struggle, and procured for him means of influence which he could not enjoy in his prison. He appears to have again reiterated this challenge in the course of the process, "complaining," says Calvin, "that it was not decent nor becoming to treat before an earthly tribunal, and even in prison, of the affairs of Christianity."* But the magistrates refused to entertain the proposal, though Calvin, for his part, agreed, and protested that, as far as regarded him, "there was nothing that he more desired than to plead such a cause in the temple before all the people."†

The Council feared, no doubt, that it would thus dispossess itself of the cognizance of an affair which stood connected with the prerogatives of which it had recently appeared so jealous. ‡ On the other hand, the friends of Servetus among the magistrates might

* *Declaration*, p. 1327.

† Ibid.

‡ This sentence of Rilliet indicates another reason for the prosecution against Servetus. The Council was, in fact, carrying out what it regarded as its prerogative. It was seeking to secure to itself power spiritual as well as civil.—TR.

fear to see their protegé defeated by Calvin, whose word was much more powerful, and thus have their own hands fettered in the final judgment, by the result of the public discussion. The spirit of domination, and that of prudence, thus induced the Council to deny the conference which Servetus desired.

The first examination before the magistrates being concluded, they delayed till another day the prosecution of the charge, and enjoined the pursuer to be ready to prove and verify the points which Servetus denied. The replies of the latter had not appeared satisfactory to the Court, since it thought right to continue the process. It is probable that, while the whole discussion concerning the Trinity was beyond the comprehension of the theologians of the Council, the condemnation which Servetus so violently pronounced against the baptism of infants might, on the other hand, appear a doctrine by so much the more dangerous, as it was associated in their minds with the bad political renown of the Anabaptists. It was under this impression that the tribunal, acceding to the latter portion of the request presented by De la Fontaine, decided that, "since, by the replies of the said accused, he was found to be guilty, it is resolved that the said Nicolas, the pursuer, be released, under submission, and with surety to follow up his charge." De la Fontaine, in fact, came under an obligation "to present himself as often as he might be called, and to prosecute his case." He then introduced as his surety the Honourable Anthony Calvin, a citizen of Geneva, and brother of the Reformer.

The next day (Wednesday), 16th of August, the Court resumed before a number of judges inferior to those of the preceding evening; but among the assessors two new characters were found. The one, who occupied as an auditor the place of the absent Lieutenant, was Philibert Berthelier; the other, who appeared as the advocate or "Speaker" of De la Fontaine, was M. Germain Colladon. Between them, more than between all the other inhabitants of the Republic, the contrast was complete; and one cannot regard them otherwise than as the representatives of the two parties which then divided Geneva—that of the patriots, and that of the strangers—the antagonists and the friends of Calvin.

Berthelier, we have said, was one of those who submitted with impatience to the yoke of the Reformer. As the son of one of the martyrs to the political freedom of Geneva, his social position and his taste for pleasure gave him the highest rank among the independent and dissipated youth. He was in Geneva the true *princeps juventutis*, and we find him at the head of all the opposition offered by the Liberty party to the austere reforms of Calvin. In the latter, he saw only a stranger who came to curtail the independence of the native country of the Genevese, for the sake of absolute and rigid notions. Such attempts irritated at once his inclinations, his self-esteem, and his patriotism; and between the Reformer and him there followed a warfare, whose issue cost Berthelier his residence in his native land, and the life of his brother, as the struggle for the liberties of

Geneva against the Duke of Savoy had cost his father his head. At the moment which occupies our attention, Berthelier, under the weight of a sentence of excommunication passed by the Consistory, which Calvin did not wish to remove, was more than ever exasperated against him; and it is evident that it was to seek an opportunity of annoying him that he came to take part in the trial of Servetus.

Germain Colladon presented himself with a different design. To the type of the Libertine party he opposed, in his person, the type of the Refugees. His serious convictions, and a disposition to austerity, had thrown him into the ranks of the French Reformed. Born in Berry, he had been obliged, for the free exercise of his faith, to come to seek refuge in Geneva, with all the exiles who preferred, like him, their religion to their native land—their God to their home. Still young, but trained for the bar, the grave studies of jurisprudence had fortified in his mind a natural tendency to inflexibility, while his profession of advocate had initiated him in the management of affairs. Devoted to Calvin by respect and by sympathy, his talents rendered him one of the most useful allies of the Reformer, with whom he subsequently co-operated in establishing in Geneva a constitution adapted to its new condition. For the time, he occupied a distinguished place in the ranks of the oppressed party—the party which was destined, two years thereafter, to retaliate upon the real children of Geneva, and fill by adoption the voids left among the citizens by the expulsion of the natural heirs. The firmness of his

faith—his connection with Calvin—his practice at the bar—rendered Colladon perhaps the best advocate that could be assigned to De la Fontaine to cope with Servetus. He was, without any doubt, called to that task by the Reformer himself, who did not wish needlessly to appear in the lists, but who felt the necessity of opposing to the accused a man so able to detect his reservations, to elicit his confessions, and drag into light his heresies and his guilt.

In the main, between Berthelier and Colladon, the contest referred less to Servetus than to Calvin—the latter rather than the former was the true object of attack and of defence; and each of the antagonists saw behind the proceedings carried on in the bishops' palace the interest of the parties who disputed for Geneva. The meeting in which they encountered was short, no doubt, because it was stormy.*

De la Fontaine and Colladon first produced the books intended to prove the accuracy of the citations quoted against Servetus. These were the passages from Melancthon and Œcolampadius, where they speak of him; then the Ptolemy, and Bible containing his Annotations; and finally, a printed copy of the *Christianismi Restitutio*. The examination was then resumed upon the articles already twice brought forward; and Servetus having replied equivocally as to the sense which he attached to the word *person* in the mystery of the Trinity, Germain Colladon, who did

* An accurate estimate of this trial can scarcely be formed, unless the view presented in these sentences be carefully borne in mind.—Tr.

not wish any uncertainty to hang over the origin of the essential heresy of Servetus, declared that he offered to "prove, by many passages of the book which Servetus had written, that he meant otherwise than he now said regarding the Trinity."

Following up his proofs, by citing the places of the *Christianismi Restitutio* to which the articles in the complaint lodged by La Fontaine referred, it appears that Colladon was interrupted by Berthelier, who, undertaking the defence of Servetus, wished to maintain the truth of the doctrines published in his work, and to speak in favour of the accused. Between Colladon and him a contest then, no doubt, began, of which the minute makes no mention; but the traces are found in the blanks which the record presents regarding the tenth and eleventh articles, and by the abrupt termination which follows: "Here they proceeded no further, but adjourned till to-morrow at mid-day—and let a book be lent to the examined, and to the said (parties) the answers (given at the first examinations), and let them make their case all ready." The meeting broke up in a short time, without the usual forms, and without a single step taken in the process. One may conclude that Berthelier did not wish to allow Servetus to be annoyed without interfering in his favour, and that the presiding Syndic had adjourned the Court, to put an end to the discussion.

And further: what one may conjecture from the information of the minute is plainly proved by the Registers of the Council. They tell us that, the next

day after this scene, Thursday, the 17th of August, Calvin, who had been informed of it, demanded an audience at the Council Chamber. He felt that the moment had arrived for him to appear, boldly to resist the hostilities against him of which Servetus was about to become the occasion, unless they were energetically opposed from the commencement.* Ceasing, then, to conceal himself behind La Fontaine and Colladon, he became, for the first time, openly the accuser of the prisoner, and "drew attention to many errors written by the said Servetus, as his books showed;" declaring "that he did not wish to excuse himself for having permitted his servant Nicolas to become a party against the said Servetus, and that he was now willing to pursue, as one prepared to be himself the prosecutor." He added, regarding P. Berthelier, "that he understood, by the process, that Berthelier had interfered to plead in excuse and defence of those things which

* "Jey est esté aoys M. Calvin sus l'affaire de Michiel Servet, et a proposé plusieurs faulses erreurs escriptes par ledict Servet, comment ses livres monstrent; et devantage a proposé de P. Bertelier que il entendre par le process que il se mesle de parler en excuse, et couverte de ceulx que ledict Servet a volu nommer constiés de son livre. Item, et a proposé quil ne se veult pas excuser d'havoir loé a son serviteur Nycolas de faire partie contre ledict Servet, et de voloir suyvre comment celluy quil veult bien estre contre luy partie.

"Sus quoy est declaré que lon suyvre ledict prisonnier, et affin que myeulx luy puyssent estre remonstrées ses erreurs, M. Calvin, et quel il voudra avecques luy, puyssent assister avecques ledict Nycolas a ses responses, et remonstrer les erreurs, et les paissages pour prouver."—*Extract from the Registers of the Little Council, 17th August*, 1553.

the said Servetus had consented to name as established by his book."* Though the meaning of the last phrase be not clear, the interposition of Berthelier in favour of Servetus is nevertheless established; and this passage of the register perfectly agrees with the narrative we have given of the interrupted meeting of the 16th of August. Besides, the protection held out by Berthelier to Servetus is notorious —two contemporaries, Roset† and Theodore Beza‡ expressly declare it. It was the natural result of their common hostility to the Reformer; and we have here the first indication of the support given to the prisoner by the Libertine party.

The observations of Calvin in the Council having, no doubt, strengthened the impressions already received by the majority of the members of Court, regarding the theological culpability of Servetus, it was of new resolved to persevere in the prosecution, and to endeavour, either to reclaim him, or render his heresies manifest to all. Calvin was authorized to assist, "in order that his errors might be better demonstrated," and to have "whomsoever he chose with him" at the examinations of the prisoner. Thus, the adjourned meeting of the previous day having been resumed to hear the answers of Servetus, Calvin assisted there; and it appears that, besides the ordinary members of the Court, other citizens, introduced,

* This is perhaps the meaning; but the obsolete French and the style render it difficult to interpret the words.—Tr.

† *Chroniques*, lib. v., ch. 50, 51.

‡ *Vie de Calvin*, under the year 1553.

perhaps, by the Reformer in terms of the Council's authority, were present at the examination.*

It turned, as before, on the different points mentioned in the libel lodged by La Fontaine, for whom Colladon continued to plead. The debate was more clear than at the previous sittings; and both the advocate and the accused entered upon details till then kept in the shade. The libel bore that Servetus had been condemned in Germany, and quoted, in proof, the passages where Melancthon and Œcolampadius most severely blamed his doctrine; to which Servetus with truth replied, that the opinion of these Reformers did not imply that he had been the object of judicial condemnation; and Colladon, reduced to the hypothesis, replied, that "if Servetus and the printer had been apprehended, they had been condemned"—a convenient argument, where the advocate puts forth as a fact the very point that was in question.

On the subject of the Geography of Ptolemy, published by Servetus, with notes, in one of which, according to the libel, some doubts injurious to Moses were emitted regarding the supposed fertility of Palestine, the accused replied (and he spoke the truth), that the note founded on was not his, and that sufficed for his justification; but he added, that, nevertheless, it contained nothing reprehensible. This reservation incensed Calvin, who now began to speak, and proved, by many arguments, that such an allegation neces-

* *Declaration*, pp. 1354, 1440.

sarily inculpated Moses, and was "a great outrage against the Holy Spirit;" but Servetus would not acquiesce. "So far," says Calvin, "was that vile dog from being abashed by such pertinent arguments, that he only twitched his muzzle, saying: 'Let us pass to something else—there is nothing wrong there.'"*

A Latin Bible, published at Lyons, under the care of Servetus, formed another ground of charge, as containing certain annotations little conformable to the analogy of faith—among other things, an explanation of the passage where Isaiah (ch. liii.) speaks of the servant of God who carried the iniquities of his people, which Servetus, according to the libel, understood of Cyrus, whilst the Christian Church understands it of Jesus Christ.† To that Servetus, supporting himself, right or wrong, by "the ancient doctors who have attached a double sense to the Old Testament," replied, that "the principal should be understood of Jesus Christ; but the history and the letter must be understood of Cyrus." In spite of this explanation, which preserved the prophetic authority of the passage, Calvin replied, "that never would Servetus have had the hardihood so wretchedly to corrupt a passage so noble, had he not lost all sense of shame, while taking a diabolical pleasure in suppressing the Christian faith."‡ Servetus was not moved by this censure more than the preceding, and

* *Declaration*, p. 1354.

† It should be observed, that Servetus is not singular in holding the opinion here ascribed to him.—Tr.

‡ *Declaration*, p. 1354.

his coolness served only to render him more culpable in the eyes of Calvin.

The printing of the *Christianismi Restitutio*, which formed one of the most essential aggravations of the case, was next charged against Servetus by his accusers; and as he professed to have published the book, to have his errors corrected if he were wrong, it was answered: "That it was not necessary to print in order to be corrected," especially "when one has been previously admonished of his errors."

At last they arrived at the articles concerning the Trinity. The discussion turned chiefly upon the ancient fathers of the Church, to whom Servetus ascribed opinions like his own upon the point in question.* He declared that anterior to the Council of Nice, no doctor had employed the word *Trinity*, and that, if the ancient fathers admitted a distinction in the divine essence, that distinction was not real, but merely personal; that is to say, it clearly implied three special modifications in the same essence, but did not prove three equal and distinct subsistences in the same Being. Servetus added, that he in effect reckoned those men "Trinitarians and Atheists," who

* It deserves to be noted, that whenever a heresy is to be established, the men called the *fathers*, but really the *children* of the Christian dispensation, are the parties cited in proof. Servetus, in the sixteenth century; the Laudites, or Canterburians, in the seventeenth; Priestley, in the eighteenth; and the Puseyites, in the nineteenth—all in effect support the same cause by the same means. The error is refuted, in a spirit of high Christian philosophy, in a sermon by Dr Chalmers, on "The Respect Due to Antiquity." It will be found in the eleventh volume of his collected works.—Tr.

"disguised" the true Trinity; and he did not deny that he gave to the doctrine, as understood of three distinct subsistences in one essence, the name of "Cerberus, the dreams of S. Augustine, and an invention of the devil." The opposite party sought to show that the doctrine imputed by Servetus to the ancient fathers was unknown to them, and that he could cite in his favour only "apocryphal writings, which are full of absurdities."

The other errors signalized as heretical by the indictment were confessed by the accused, or proved by textual quotations, both from his printed book and his work sent in manuscript to Calvin; while this protracted debate appears to have led to other very keen discussions. A single instance which Calvin relates, and which could not be questioned, even though the minutes do not mention it,* may give some idea of the cast of Servetus' mind. They were discussing the relations between the divine *substance* and that of the creatures, which, being viewed in a pantheistic light by the Spaniard, were mingled by him in a kind of identity of nature, so that he declared that "all creatures are of the substance of God, and that all things are full of infinite Gods." "I was shocked," continues Calvin, "by an absurdity so gross, and sharply replied: How, unhappy man, if any one strike the pavement with his foot, and say that he tramples on thy God, wouldst thou

* This fact is elsewhere attested by Servetus himself, who, when Calvin alluded to it in their written discussion, seeks to explain it otherwise than his opponent, but does not deny it.

not be horrified at having subjected the Majesty of Heaven to such indignity? He then replied: 'I have no doubt that this bench, and this buffet, and all that you can show me, are of the substance of God.' Forthwith, when it was objected, that in his estimation the devil must be substantially God, smiling, he very boldly rejoined: 'Can you doubt it? As for me, I hold this for a general maxim, that all things are part and parcel of God, and that all nature is his substantial Spirit.'"*

Finally, as to the personal grievances, the pursuer produced in proof, besides the letter addressed to Calvin, and contained in the *Christianismi Restitutio*, a copy of the Institutes of Calvin, on the margins of which Servetus had written notes offensive to the Reformer. He also lodged a letter in Latin, sent by Servetus to Abel Popin, a minister of the Church of Geneva, in which the keenest attacks were made against the doctrines of the clergy of that city. Servetus acknowledged the notes and the letter to be his; the latter remained annexed to the papers in the process.

We have already seen that De la Fontaine, in his petition of the 15th of August, had asked to be discharged as a party in the suit, having sufficiently proved the justice of the prosecution against Servetus. Colladon repeated this request, desiring him "to be discharged and liberated from the obligation under which the said Nicolas and his surety lie, with judgment in his favour for all the expenses and loss in-

* *Declaration*, p, 1353.

curred in prison." Upon this, the Court, granting his petition, and finding, "by the proofs and facts produced on the part of the pursuer, that Servetus clearly appeared to be guilty," resolved immediately to liberate De la Fontaine, and Anthony Calvin his surety. As to the losses and charges claimed by the complainer, they were "deferred till the close of the action."

Before the rising of the Court, some additional questions were put to Servetus referring to his flight from Vienne, and to his book. He explained, upon the first point, that he escaped by scaling a wall, and that he had afterwards attempted to reach Spain, but had returned through fear of the police. As to his book, he declared that they had thrown off a thousand copies, of which the printer had sent a certain number to Frankfort. Calvin did not forget this last information, which was corroborated by a letter of the printer himself; and a few days thereafter (27th August) he wrote to inform the Church of Frankfort, and solicit the seizure and destruction of the cargo. It appears that it was an agent of Robert Stephen who was intrusted with the request of Calvin, and asked to superintend its fulfilment;* but it is probable that the start had been taken, and power given a month before, by the printer at Vienne to an agent to proceed to Frankfort, "secretly to destroy the books, without leaving a single page or fragment."* However this may be, the almost entire disappearance of the *Christianismi Restitutio* proves that the copies

* Historia de Morte Serveti, in *Mosheim*, p. 449.

forwarded to Frankfort had never been exposed to sale, and that they were all destroyed. The sitting terminated by the liberation of N. de la Fontaine and his surety.

The first act of the Trial is ended.

The result was not favourable to Servetus. The interference of Berthelier had been rather injurious to him, by bringing Calvin into the arena, and rendering him so much more eager to continue the contest which had thus become doubly important to him. This keen opposition of the Reformer immediately drew off from Servetus those allies who did not wish to engage in a dubious struggle with Calvin. Abandoned to his own resources, in face of a powerful opponent, the prisoner understood that he must now change his system of defence, and recede from his position of aggressor. His policy is no more to cope with Calvin, but only to save his own life. To violence succeeds moderation, finesse replaces arrogance, and Servetus is about to put forth all his ingenuity to prove himself innocuous.

* See Appendix, C, for a letter from Arnoullet, the printer of the work, to P. Bertet, regarding its destruction.

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNCIL OF GENEVA BECOMES THE PROSECUTOR OF SERVETUS.

During the last days of the week in which Servetus was imprisoned, the trial was suspended, and was not resumed till Monday, the 21st of August. It is probable that in that interval Calvin had dealt urgently with the judges to confirm them in the design of establishing the culpability of Servetus, and had depicted him less as his theological adversary than as an enemy to the Christian faith, already tried, on that single account, by the Romanists themselves—Would the Council show itself to be more indifferent than the Romanists were in defending the honour of God?—Their Lordships, then, in Council, adopted the following resolution on the 21st of August: "Inasmuch as the case of heresy of M. Servetus vitally affects the welfare of Christendom, it is resolved to proceed with his trial; and also to write to Vienne to know why he was imprisoned, and how he escaped; and after that, when all is ascertained, to write to the magistrates of Berne, of Bâle, of Zurich, of Schaff-

hausen, and other Churches of the Swiss, to acquaint them with the whole."

The Council, it is manifest, even in following Calvin's suggestions, did not wish to depend solely on his word, nor to adopt a final decision till it should rest on the opinion of the foreign Churches, whose authority resulted from their impartial position in the debate. The Council recollected that, on occasion of the discussion with Bolsec,* upon whose culpability Calvin strenuously insisted, the Churches of Switzerland, when consulted, had exhorted to moderation and prudence in a way that did not satisfy the Reformer, and that the Little Council of Berne had expressed itself strongly against the employment of all corporeal punishment. One learns from this, that the confidence of the magistrates in Calvin was no longer implicit, independent of the other motives of opposition which estranged them (now). But before having recourse to a foreign jury, the Council desired to urge forward the preparation of matters for the trial; and that was renewed on the afternoon of the same day.

The right to prosecute had now devolved on the Attorney-General, Claude Rigot, in consequence of the pursuing party being freed, and in compliance with the criminal Edicts.† He was not prepared, however,

* In 1551. It related mainly to the subject of predestination. Bolsec was banished, returned to the bosom of the Popish Church, and then took revenge on Calvin by writing a scurrilous Life of him.—Tr.

† Ordonnances of 1543. "Que en tontes causes qui apportien-

to present the new indictment; and the first part of the meeting was employed in examining Servetus on the subject of a letter which had been read that morning in Council, and of which we have already spoken. It was addressed by Balth. Arnoullet, the printer of the *Christianismi Restitutio*, to one of his friends, named Bertet, residing at Chastillon. In that letter,* dated on the 14th of July, Arnoullet gave various details regarding the relations which had subsisted between Servetus and the corrector, Gueroult, from which it was plain that the latter alone had been in connection with the author, and had full knowledge of the contents of the work.† This letter being shown to Servetus, he replied that he could not recognise it as the production of Arnoullet, because his handwriting was unknown to him; but it proves that Arnoullet was, in fact, the printer of the work of Servetus, and had been imprisoned at Vienne along with him.

After this special examination, the second part of the sitting was occupied by a debate between the accused and Calvin, who had been introduced with the ministers, his colleagues, "to maintain," according to the *proces verbal*, "the meaning opposed to that which Servetus had attached to the authors."

dront au bien et profit de la ville, le procureur-general soit instant, même aux causes criminelles qui dependent, quil soit adjoinct au lieutenant."

* See it, Appendix, C.

† It will be borne in mind, that Servetus had first acknowledged this, then denied it, and persisted in the denial.—Tr.

Indeed, Calvin interpreted the passages from the fathers, quoted by Servetus in support of his thesis, in a manner very different from the sense which the latter assigned to them, and mentioned Justin Martyr, among others, to prove, in refutation of Servetus, that the word *Trinity* had been employed in the Church anterior to the Council of Nice. On this subject Calvin reports a feature which is not found in the minutes, but which could not be gratuitously ascribed to Servetus, since all his allies (and Berthelier was among them) could easily have denied it. He relates, then, that having brought the text of Justin, he showed to Servetus the passages where that author maintains the orthodox doctrine regarding the Trinity. —"But that clever man, Servetus," adds Calvin, "who gloried especially in having the gift of tongues, knew almost as well how to read Greek as a child at A, B, C. Perceiving that he was in a trap, he angrily asked, in great confusion, for the Latin translation. I answered that there was not one, and that none had ever been printed. Upon this, I took occasion to charge him with impudence. What does this show? The book has not been translated into Latin, and you cannot read Greek, and yet you pretend that you are familiar with the reading of Justin. I pray you, whence did these testimonies come, which are produced by you as freely as if you had the author at your finger ends? He, with his brazen front, as usual, launched out into idle words, and showed not the least symptom of being touched with shame."*

* *Declaration*, p. 1355.

There is certainly some exaggeration in this recital, for, in fact, Servetus knew the Greek; his edition of Ptolemy, and his philological disquisitions upon passages of Scripture, manifestly prove it. Perceiving himself defeated, it is probable that he hesitated in his reading, and to try to veil his defeat, he would have appealed to another interpretation than Calvin's. The latter would then hasten to conclude that his opponent did not know the original language of Justin, and took care not to lose the opportunity of inflicting a new defeat.

A more serious discussion followed between the Reformer and his rival regarding the use of the title, *Son of God.* Servetus declared that it should not be applied to Jesus Christ till after he appeared upon earth. Calvin affirmed, with the Church, that it was necessary to attach the title to the invisible and divine Word,* who became incarnate in the person of Jesus; but who, previous to that, and from all eternity, formed a really distinct subsistence in the essence of God. As he always did, Servetus replied that this real distinction of the Word was a false idea, and that the Son of God did not exist before his incarnation, except as a simple mode of being in the Godhead,† and not as a person endowed with his own proper existence, in the divine essence. It followed, and the debate turned on this point, that, according to

* Rilliet employs both the terms used in reference to this designation of our Lord, and says, La *Parole* invisible, le *Verbe* Divin. —Tr.

† "Que comme une simple maniere d'etre de la Divinité."

Servetus, the Word, not being a separate reality in the essence of God, could not unite himself as such to the person of Christ, but that the body of Christ was formed of the very substance of the Divinity; so that the human element and the divine were not distinct, but intimately mingled* in a single unity—from which Calvin concluded, "that in that case, the body of Jesus was not as the Church understands, a body like ours."

Without proceeding further, Servetus expressed the desire that he might be allowed the books which were necessary to prove his assertions, and Calvin consented to leave in his hands some of the volumes which he had brought; as to the others, it was resolved to cause them to be purchased at the prisoner's expense, either in Geneva or at Lyons. Servetus had also requested them to grant him paper and ink, to write a petition to the Council. This request was also granted; but the jailer was enjoined to give him a single sheet of paper, and to keep him "very close." Thus, while enabling him to provide for his defence, they sought to hinder him from holding any communication with those outside the prison. Calvin, who was present at the meeting, was certainly not a stranger to these precautionary measures. They prove that the prisoner had partisans in the city, whose influence and counsels the Reformer feared; and when Servetus found himself thus deprived of his allies, and obliged to stand alone, it appears that for the time he sought safety in moderation.

* "Confondus."

In the meantime, the Council, following up its resolution to obtain evidence to establish the guilt of Servetus, caused write to the Judges of Vienne, to procure from them the particulars of the charges which had led to his detention in that city—"thinking, and knowing well," said the letter, "that that was not without cause, and that you have evidence and information against him, by which he would well deserve to be chastised. Wherefore, since he has come into our hands, we ask that it may please you to communicate to us a copy of the evidence, and information, and summons which you have against him, to assist us in following out his trial to its termination."*

* The following is the letter from the Council of Geneva to the magistrates of Vienne on the subject of Servetus:—

"Aux nobles, saiges, spectables et magniffiques Seigneurs vybaillyfz, juges et aultres gens du Roy en la court de Vienne, noz bons voysins et bien chiers amys.

"Nobles, sages, spectables et magniffiques Seigneurs, nous nous recommandons de bien bon cœur à voz bonnes grâces.

"Magniffiques Seigneurs, nous avons en noz prisons ung nommé Michel Servet, duquel nous avons entendu quil soyt esté prys et détenuz par vous en vostre cité de Vienne et quil sen soyt sorty de prison sans dire adieu à lhoste, mais par fracture; et combien que le trouvons chargé et atteint de crime si est ce que nous ne pouvons bonnement scavoir de luy ni daultre de pardeça, les choses pour quoy il fusse par devers vous, estroitement detenus, pensans et entendans bien que ce ne soit pas esté sans cause, et que ayez contre luy indices et informations par lesquelles il méritoit bien estre chastié, et que sil ne se fust esté fuy en heussiez bien faict le debvoir. Pourquoy puisquil nous est venu ès mains desirans à iustice et à luy rendre notre debvoir, nous avons dressé par devers vous nostre présente prière par nostre serviteur, pour par icelle vous prier il vous plaise ainsin comme scavez que une chacune iustice est tenue suffrager à laultre en tel cas, nous communiquer doble des indices, informations

The messenger of State who carried the despatch, was charged to bring with him the documents which the Syndics and Council desired, while it appears that they were ignorant that sentence of outlawry had been pronounced against the heretic at Vienne.

On the same day (Tuesday the 22d of August) on which the letter of the Council was written, Servetus prepared in his prison the petition which he had expressed his wish to address to the magistrates, but of which they did not take cognizance till after the meeting held in the bishops' palace, on Wednesday the 23d. It was at the latter sitting that Claude Rigot, the Attorney-General, presented the new indictment which he had prepared since he began to take part, as public prosecutor, in the discussions. Its title ran thus: "These are the interrogations and articles upon which the Attorney-General of this city of Geneva desires to question Michael Servetus, a prisoner, guilty of blasphemies, of heresies, and of disturbing Christendom." Rigot did not take part in person at the examination, when questions to the number of thirty were put, in terms of the indictment, by N. Chabod, of the Council of Sixty, who had been Sheriff the previous year, and who occupied at that meeting the place o Lieutenant P. Tissot.

et exploictz que vous avez contre luy pour nous ayder à suyvre à la vuydange de son procès, tout ainsin que vouldriez que fissions pour vous en tel cas, ce que vouldrions bien faire voire plus grand, en mateur (matière) ont (où) seroit en nostre pouvoir. Cela attendans, nous prions Dieu il luy plaise vous donner heureuse prospérité destat. De Genève ce 22 daugst 1553."

These questions differ completely from those which De la Fontaine had proposed. Whilst the latter related almost exclusively to the theological opinions of Servetus, and his offences against Calvin, the questions of the Attorney-General referred to the person of the author—to his previous history—his connection with other theologians—the printing of his book, and the fatal consequences that must follow its publication; and, finally, to his object in coming to Geneva, and his connections in that city. The first indictment had particularized the guilt of Servetus; the second was framed so as to generalize it.

The details concerning his doctrines had disappeared; his charges against Calvin were no more mentioned: the theological prosecution gave place to a trial whose tendency bore less on the actual heresy of the accused than on the dangerous results of his opinions, and of his persisting in spreading them. The horizon seemed to expand—men left the sphere of the schools to enter upon that of society—Calvin disappeared before the general interests of the Reformed Churches. Whether it was himself that had wished this, or whether they passed him over in silence without asking his opinion, certain it is that his personal grievances were no longer placed in the first rank of charges in criminal trials, as they had been a few years before. James Gruet and Peter Ameaulx had seen their sentence of death or disgrace in a great measure occasioned by their attacks against the person and doctrine of M. John Calvin; in the public prosecution and condemnation of Servetus, no account was taken

of his altercations with the Reformer—the position of the latter had changed too much for any offence against him to be reckoned a crime. If Servetus had had, in the eyes of Genevese justice, no other fault than that of which De la Fontaine declared him guilty in regard to Calvin, his acquittal had been sure. The Reformer is no longer confounded with the Reformation; and if he alone had been concerned in the affair of Servetus, all his efforts would have been unavailing to secure the condemnation of his adversary.*

Whether Calvin himself held this opinion, and had, in consequence, withdrawn from the discussion, that it might succeed the better, or whether they set aside what concerned him, because they saw it would serve no useful purpose in the prosecution, it is equally true that Servetus was tried, and, as we shall mention below, condemned, by the majority of his judges, not at all as the opponent of Calvin — scarcely as an heretic—but essentially as seditious. Politics acted a much more important part than theology, towards the close of his trial—they came on the stage with the Attorney-General. The articles drawn up by him were prepared on the avowed conviction, that Servetus had always been a fiery and dangerous spirit, whose constant endeavours had tended to the entire disor-

* Such are the sentiments of one who has thoroughly examined the documentary and historical evidence of this melancholy affair. The dispassionate will easily see how it affects the position of Calvin, in reference to the trial of Servetus. He was, in fact, no party to it in its closing and more painful stages.—Tr.

ganizing of Christendom. This is what they hoped to deduce from the answers which the public minister wished to draw from the accused.

But Servetus did not allow himself to be surprised, and replied to the questions designed to convict him, with much ingenuity, ability, and apparent frankness. In our day, one would have said that he conducted the affair like a man of talent.

After having described the events of his past life, he had to repel the charges brought against him for having, in spite of the warnings of doctors pronounced against his first book, persevered in the publication of a second, which was only a reproduction of the other. He replied, that " he thought he would offend God, if he did not do it, and that he had published with as much zeal as if it had been to save his soul; for our Lord has commanded us in St Matthew, 10th chapter, that what has been revealed to us in secret should not be concealed, but imparted to others; and has also said, in the 5th chapter, that we should not put the light which He has given us under a bench or stool, but in a place where it might enlighten others; and thus, according to God and his conscience, he thought he had accurate y followed all the passages of Holy Scripture which speak of such questions, and also the chief among the ancient doctors of the Church. He wished to say and to do what was right, and still thinks he has not done ill, but good, with an upright intention, as our Lord says in the 5th chapter of St Matthew: ' If the eye be good, the whole body is full of light; if the intention be good, the whole deed

will be reputed good.'* And that he had never been seditious or turbulent, but had acted with the design of aiding the good."

He added, that as to his book, he was far from regretting its publication. He had entitled it *Christianismi Restitutio*, "because he thought to restore many things which were amiss; and that he meant by that title, the restoration of the doctrine of Christianity;" without pretending, however, "that those who had written before him, or differently from his book, had not understood the Christian religion—while they might have erred in some respects, especially those of them who had written after the Council of Nice."

It was with the same good sense, and the same moderation, that Servetus replied to the charge which was brought against him, of having slandered as unchristian the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, and having condemned all who did not think with him, as some thought was apparent from his letter to M. Abel Popin. He replied, "that he had never thought that either the Churches of Geneva or of Germany would go to perdition for that, but that those who had written might have erred upon certain points; for the epistle produced by M. Abel contains scholastic disputations, in which one uses very vehement language, the better to persuade his opponent—not that he believes, for all that, that either he or the others would be condemned; that they have uttered many greater injuries against him, in terms publicly

* It is perhaps unnecessary to add that this latitudinarian sentiment is not that of the Scripture.—Tr.

printed, both in Latin and French; and that what he had written to the said Abel, was more than six years ago, while he had written it only to discover the truth, not to publish it, nor to defame him, and still less the Republic of Geneva, and other cities and Churches."

What he did not disown was, having thought "that all those who have been baptized in their infancy in these and other Churches, are not truly baptized;" but he added, "that if he be wrong, he is ready to be corrected; and most earnestly asks for pardon." His horror at the baptism of children was never dislodged from his mind.

The Indictment sought to exhibit Servetus as contentious, and, at all hazards, a debauchee, in order to find in his want of chastity, the motive "which urged and excited him to treat so boldly of the principal topics and essential truths of the Christian religion"—a deduction this which is abundantly extravagant, for the theology of Servetus had little resemblance to the pastimes of a libertine. The Attorney-General, however, could not understand how a heretic could be anything else than a profligate. Bossuet understood it better; and as his words appear to be perfectly applicable to Servetus, it will not be improper to quote them: "It is not necessary to believe," said the Bishop of Meaux, "that heresies have always the wicked and the libertine for their authors, who, on set purpose, make religion subservient to their passions. St Gregory of Naziazum does not describe heresiarchs as men without religion, but as men who

hold their religion awry. 'They are,' he says, 'men of capacious mind; for feeble souls are equally useless for good or for ill. But these powerful minds,' he continues, 'are at the same time ardent and impetuous, who hold religion with ill-regulated zeal;' that is to say, they have a false zeal, 'and mingling a haughty moroseness, an indomitable boldness, and their own peculiar humours, with their religion, they push all to extremity.'"* These three last traits depict Servetus.

But he could with truth clear himself from the charges of immorality brought against him by the Attorney-General; and he repelled that of being quarrelsome, by giving the assurance that he had never been engaged in any quarrel, except in a single case—in lawful self-defence. As to the charge of libertinage, he declared that his physical constitution did not permit of his exposing himself to it; and that far from "not having zeal, and not taking care to live purely like a true Christian," he had been "studious of the Holy Scripture, having a zeal for the truth, while he thought he had lived as a true Christian should do."

The same simplicity, if not the same candour, is found in the answer given to the question which was put "if he did not know well that his book and doctrine would throw Christendom into great commotion." To this he replied, that he did not think his book would disturb the peace of Christendom, but would be profitable to it—as it would give occasion to reflective men to speak their sentiments more plainly,

* Histoire des Variations, V. 1.

and thus the truth which had begun to be exhibited by a few, would be disseminated among all. Servetus was then in the humour of great moderation; and nothing was more modest or more wise than his manner of describing his work. It is true that he was thus in direct contradiction with its contents; for it was nothing but a declaration of war against all the Churches of Christendom—in it the author manifests as much impatience and violence as he here exhibits gentleness and time-serving. Servetus attenuates as much as he could his own intentions and the aim of his production, in the hope of soothing his judges; and it is for the same purpose that he barters away his reputation, declaring that he knew no one who adhered to his doctrine—an assertion which was certainly untrue.

It was, in like manner, very natural for Servetus to deny having come to Geneva, as he was accused of having done, "there to disseminate his doctrines, and trouble that Church;" for he durst not allow that such was his design in coming, and behoved to allege another reason remote from the spirit of proselytism. He therefore declared that Geneva lay on the route which he wished to take in proceeding to Naples by Zurich; adding that he knew no person there, and had not been in connection with any one whatever.*

* However much we may deplore the death of Servetus, we cannot but condemn the frequent and deliberate falsehoods of which he was guilty. Certain it is, that the religion of Him who is *The Truth* had not obtained the control of his mind.—Tr.

In this examination, more than in any of the preceding, Servetus, as we have seen, tries to render himself insignificant—to divest his person and his conduct of all importance by reducing each to moderate proportions. That was a means, if not of diminishing his theological guilt, at least of considerably lessening in the eyes of his judges the disturbing results of his doctrines, and rendering them, consequently, more disposed to treat with indulgence an error which scarcely extended itself, in any degree, further than the mind that had produced it. Servetus well understood, that if he could free himself from the suspicion of being a man of bad repute, and dangerous to the public tranquillity, his doctrine, by itself, would not form a sufficient motive for condemning him, or at least would not draw down a very severe castigation.*

It would appear, from the urgency of the Attorney-General's reply to the defence of the accused, that though more ingenious than truthful, that defence had not failed to produce a certain impression upon the judges; and it is probable, for the same reason, that this impression was strengthened by the reading of the petition of which we have already spoken, and which was communicated to the Council the day after the inquiry—Thursday, the 24th of August.

* The reader will here notice again what was the view of this case which really led to this prosecution by *the Attorney-General and Magistrates of Geneva.* Politics, rather than theology—the public peace, rather than sound doctrine—appeared to them to demand the punishment of Servetus.—Tr.

That petition is, like the answers of Servetus, clear and temperate; but it is much more strong and pungent in its reasoning. It turns upon two points: the first is, that "he should be freed from the criminal charge;" the second, that if this liberation be refused, he should be allowed the aid of an Advocate who knew the laws and procedure of the country. In support of his first request, the petitioner alleged "that it is a new invention, unknown to the apostles and disciples of the ancient Church, to accuse a party for the doctrines of Scripture, or inquiries derived from them;" and he confirmed his remark both by reciting the contents of Acts xviii. and xix., and by the conduct of Constantine towards Arius; from which he concluded, that in the first ages of the Christian Church, it had been resolved that all questions of heresy "should be decided by the Churches, and that he who should be convicted or condemned by them, if he would not return by repentance, should be banished; which punishment has always been in force against heretics in the ancient Church."

This position was not assumed by Servetus to serve a purpose, for it is found word for word in his letters to Calvin, when he treats of punishment in matters civil and religious.* The risk of encountering capital punishment made him regard it as good fortune to escape from the affair at the expense of banishment; and he was not alone in being well satisfied with the choice of that punishment.

To the historical argument derived from the prac-

* See *Christianismi Restitutio*, xxvii. *Epist. ad Calv.*, *p.* 656.

tice of the ancient Church, upon the model of which the Reformation professed to be built, Servetus added another perfectly reasonable, but which unhappily was not more effectual than the preceding. He said: "Secondly, my Lords, the petitioner beseeches you to consider that he has not offended either in your territories or elsewhere—he has not been either seditious or turbulent; for the questions of which he treats are abstruse, and addressed only to the learned; and that all the time he was in Germany he had never spoken on these questions, except to Œcolampadius, Bucer, and Capito. In France, moreover, he never spoke to a soul; and further still, the Anabaptists, who rebel against magistrates, and wish to have all things in common, he has ever refuted and reproved. From which he concludes, that he ought not to be detained on a criminal charge, for having, without any sedition, put prominently forward certain questions of the ancient doctors of the Church." *

Here, as in his examination, Servetus struggles to explain away the charge which would have rendered him truly culpable in the eyes of his judges—that of being a promoter of dispeace. He tries to keep the question in a purely speculative region; and there can be no doubt, that had he been able to make it appear to be divested of all *practical* results, the issue of his

* We have here another opportunity of ascertaining the view *which Servetus himself* now took of his trial. His petition is addressed to magistrates, as magistrates; for he saw and felt that it was on the ground of policy, and not of simple heresy, that he was now prosecuted.—Tr.

trial would not have been fatal. In the meantime, his petition did not draw forth any answer from the Council, which contented itself with resolving that the prisoner "be held to his replies—to proceed with the trial, and that his petition be therein inserted."

Meanwhile, the general dispositions of men's minds in Geneva, and the sentiments which Calvin inspired, did not allow the imprisonment and trial of Servetus to leave public opinion in a state of indifference. It was like a new aliment supplied to passions already keenly excited; it was an occasion of fear to some, of hope to others, and of interest to all. From what we know of the circumstances of the Republic, the adversaries of Calvin were obliged, in order to counterbalance his interference in the trial, and derive advantage from it to themselves, to endeavour to awaken the public sympathy and commiseration in favour of Servetus. Calvin, on the other hand, sought to defend himself, and guide opinion back to its former channel. He employed the means which his office placed within his reach, and from the pulpit exposed the errors of Servetus before a numerous auditory, carefully bringing out his impiety and his blasphemies, scattering all the excuses with which men tried to conceal his crime, and condemning the compassion with which they were pleased to regard him.* This sermon, which was

* See *Contra Libellum Calvini*, 39. "Quodam die dominico, frequentissimâ concione, Serveti, qui tum recens erat in carcere, opiniones populo exposuit, et copiose tractavit (Calvinus)." [The reader will here be reminded of similar scenes in our own country, when Knox, and Bruce, and Welsh, and Simson, and others assailed in the pulpit the errors of the day, because it was then the sole

probably delivered on the Lord's-day, 27th of August, testifies also that the Reformer required to employ all the resources of his influence to neutralize the efforts of his adversaries, and destroy the public interest which would have attached to the person of Servetus.

It was with the same design that the Attorney-General, Rigot (or perhaps under his name, Calvin himself, as Servetus pretends) prepared a second indictment against the accused, designed to weaken in the minds of the judges the impression which his answers must have produced on them. This document consists of two separate parts. The first embraces the refutation of the arguments contained in the petition of Servetus, and establishes the fact, that the first Christian emperors claimed for themselves the cognizance and trial of heresies, and that their laws and constitutions pronounced the pain of death against "those who thought erroneously of the faith regarding the Trinity," and against blasphemers.

The Attorney-General observed that Servetus, who had studied law at Toulouse, could not be ignorant of the existence of these laws and constitutions, but that he wished to deprive magistrates of the right of punishing heretics, because "his conscience condemned him, and proved him worthy of death; and to escape from that, he wished, by advancing a doctrine so false, to prevent the capital punishment of the guilty." It was, further, with the design of not appearing guilty of the error "of the Anabaptists, who rebel against

instrument of informing the public mind, and creating or guiding public opinion.—Tr.]

magistrates," that Servetus pretends in his petition that he has refuted their doctrine; "but he could not show a single passage (said the Attorney-General) where he has done so." That is possible—but it is not the less true, that the charge against Servetus of being hostile to the powers that be is unjust; for he, on the contrary, proves in his book the necessity of their appointment, and the obligation to obey them.*

As to his allegation that he had not communicated his doctrine to any one, that is, continues the charge, "an evident untruth; for he himself has said, under the tenth question, that he would reckon it an offence against God if he had concealed, and not communicated to others, what God had revealed to him. How could any one believe that he had not spoken to a single person during the thirty years that had elapsed since he commenced to discuss and print his horrible heresies? Consider also, his age of twenty when he began, at which period the young are not on their guard against communicating to their companions what they know and study. By this one may easily judge with what kind of conscience the said Servetus has attempted in his answers to pervert justice, and whether he has repented of his horrible misdeeds; for in some replies he says that he offers to be corrected, and cries 'mercy:' and afterwards, in many other places, he is confident, and audaciously maintains that he has never spoken or acted amiss."

From the keenness of these passages, one perceives

* *Christianismi Restitutio*, pp. 433, 655.

that the charge was not to be abandoned: on the contrary, it was to become more vigorous and urgent. It now crushes the defences, tears away the mask, and lets Servetus see, for the first time, at the termination of the process, the prospect of the worst kind of punishment. Whether it was because Calvin had exercised some influence over the Attorney-General, who appears to have been of his party,* or because that magistrate, once engaged in the pursuit, thought it his duty to persevere therein with vigour, one sees that he is beforehand perfectly convinced of the guilt of the accused. He regards him as already condemned, and rejects with indignation the demand which he made for an advocate to aid him. This refusal, authorized by the criminal Edicts,† does not the less betray the irritation and the fears which the able tactics of Servetus had occasioned. "*Item*," says the document, "seeing that he knows so well how to lie, there is no need that he should ask a procurator; for who is there that could or would aid him in such impudent falsehoods and horrible purposes? Add to this, that it is forbidden by law, and was never seen that such seducers spoke by counsel, and the interposition of an attorney. And yet more; there is not one jot of apparent innocence which requires an attorney; wherefore he ought to be instantly denied such a request, as

* Rilliet speaks conjecturally, not historically, here.—TR.

† "Si le criminel demande destre admis a ses justifications, que le Conseil regarde sil est de raison ou non."—*Ordonnances de* 1543. [Legal and authorized as the denial of an advocate to Servetus was, it forms, according to our views of equity in such cases, one of the worst features of this painful trial.—TR.]

inept and impertinent, and to reply pertinently to the following articles."

These articles, which formed the second part of the indictment, were produced at the meeting by the Lieutenant, Tissot, who "required that upon them the said Servetus should be interrogated, and answer Yes, or No." They asked, first, how he would establish the truth of the facts alleged in his petition, regarding the punishment of heretics in the ancient Church." "By the histories," he replied, "which have spoken of Constantine the Great."

He was next accused of having calumniated "some teachers of the Word of God, by charging them with blasphemies and heresy," which was, on his part, they said, a capital crime. While perfectly agreeing that the calumny well deserved that character, Servetus maintained that, "in matters of disputation," it had become common to condemn one's opponents, without being, on that account, treated as a defamer. Being examined regarding his connection with Capito and Œcolampadius, who, he alleged, agreed with him in opinion, though he should have known that they were "doctors approved by well-reformed Churches," he replied that that approbation was not general, and that Luth and Melancthon had "written against Œcolampadius on the subject of the sacrament and free will"—an adroit allusion to the divergencies of the Reformers by which he might justify his own. As to the adherence of the two theologians to his doctrine, he maintained, and apparently with reason,* that

* Compare *Rœhrich*, Geschichte der Reformation, in Elsass, ii., S. 77.

Capito did adhere, "without having the power," said Servetus, "to prove it, inasmuch as he spoke with him in private, without any other witness but God;" but he granted that Œcolampadius had withdrawn his assent.

It was said in answer, that in his studies of law, he must have acquired the knowledge of the Justinian Code, and, among other things, of the Titles *De Summa Trinitate*, *De Catholica Fide*, *De Hæreticis*, and *De Apostatis*, where those are condemned who hold opinions like his. Servetus replied, that he had only read in that book "some rubrics here and there; that he also studied it at school; but that for twenty-four years he had not seen it." Besides, added he, "Justinian did not belong to the times of the primitive and ancient Church; but in his day many things had become corrupted, while the bishops had already commenced their tyranny, and were introducing criminal prosecutions into the Church"—an able and pertinent reply, by which the accused brought expertly out the contrast between the pretended return of the Reformation to the practices of ancient Christianity, and the appeal to an ecclesiastical legislation begun during the epoch whence the Reformed dated the corruption of the Church.

He exhibited neither less composure nor less expertness in his reply to the objection which was offered as to his being self-contradictory, in first confessing that "he would have offended God by concealing, and not imparting to others, the doctrine which had been revealed to him," while yet he declared "that he had

abstained from speaking of it, except to three doctors whom he named." "I did so," replied Servetus, "because our Saviour has commanded us not to throw pearls before swine. Besides, I did not wish to put forth the doctrine among weak people, nor among the Papists, where there is great cruelty and persecution" —a skilful insinuation as to the difference which ought to exist in this last respect between the Romanists and their opponents, for Servetus did not fail to perceive that his life was there concerned; and this is one trait more which exhibits him, through all this stage of his trial, as giving proof of an ingenious mind, and as completely master of himself.

The public functionary—and this was not without a motive—wished to show that the accused had held intercourse by letters with Italy, where his doctrines then reckoned numerous partisans, and of which Servetus could neither be ignorant nor neglectful. But as this allegation of the Attorney-General was not supported by any actual proof, it was easy for the prisoner to reply by a simple denial, which he knew how to strengthen by asserting that his only correspondents had been Calvin, the pastor Abel Popin, and Peter Viret. As these, moreover, were the only parties who could communicate to the tribunal any of his letters, this avowal could not compromise him, while it proved the sincerity of his averments.

Numerous questions were next addressed to him, regarding the printing of his book at Vienne, and his connection with the printer Arnoullet, and the corrector, William Gueroult. Servetus replied evasively.

Contradicting the confidential letter of Arnoullet, and the answers which he himself had given at the commencement of the trial, he protested that he had never had any connection, even indirectly, with Gueroult on the subject of his work. Upon this point the accused evidently belied the truth; for it was manifest, from the explanations given by the printer, and the part acted by Gueroult in the printing-house, that the latter must have been in habitual connection with the author. The perseverance of Servetus in denying that fact distinctly proves its reality; and his conduct cannot be explained, except by the fear which he felt lest they should establish between his connection with the Genevese corrector and his own subsequent visit to Geneva an agreement which might disclose the motive of his coming.*

He repelled with greater success the charge of debauchery, of which they were unwilling to hold him acquitted, and in support of which they quoted some light expressions of Servetus.†

Passing to a question of a very different kind, the charge received an answer which was not less to the purpose. What do you mean, he was asked, "by saying that the truth begins to manifest itself, and

* This obvious falsehood of Servetus tends to lessen the sympathy which his trial occasions, inasmuch as it shows that he had a design in visiting Geneva which he would not avow—no doubt the spreading of his opinions. Rilliet is clearly of that mind; so that the falsehood persisted in gives reason to fear that on other points also Servetus was not guided by the truth.—Tr.

† "Ou citait je ne sais quel propos leger qu'il aurait tenu sur ses bonnes fortunes." [His reply partook of the same character.—Tr.]

will spread more and more?" Do you intend by that to say, that your "doctrine will be received, and that it is a doctrine of truth?" I mean, said Servetus, to speak of the progress of Reform, as when the truth "began to be declared in the time of Luther, and has spread even till now." This explanation afforded no handle to the critic; but Servetus added, that the onward march of the Reformation had not reached its termination, and that "it will manifest itself still further concerning some things which he supposed to be not yet accurately explained." This assertion sounded worse in the ears of those who were bound to reckon the Reformation perfectly complete; and he was therefore asked to what he then referred. If he had dared to be sincere, he would have frankly opposed his own doctrine to orthodoxy, as being the truth at which Reform would by degrees arrive; but he did not feel himself sufficiently strong to avow his conviction without evasion, and he threw himself upon accessory questions, offering to explain them by the Bible, or by the fathers of the Church, better than he had done in his book, if they would open up for him a conference with the learned.

At the same time, even while refusing openly to avow his opinion as to the success of his doctrine, Servetus did not deny it. He declared "that he could not divine whether his doctrine would be received or not, but that he must hold it to be truth till they showed him the contrary." Then exhibiting in a glimpse, without insisting on the foundation of his hopes, he adds with address, "that at the commence-

ment things are rejected which are afterwards received." The Reforms of Luther and Calvin have completely triumphed over the sentences of condemnation which awaited their first promulgation. Why should not mine also emerge?—Behold the mind of Servetus, concealed through policy, but indicated by implication!

He found greater difficulty in justifying himself regarding his very strange opinion that the young, under twenty years of age, are not subject to sin, nor liable to any punishment—a doctrine which, according to the libel, would have the necessary effect of relaxing the morals of youth. Servetus referred to his book, and without explaining himself categorically as to the foundation of this paradox, he declared that he had never meant to speak of anything but exemption from capital punishment, and not at all of the suppression of judicial prosecutions, of chastisements "like the whip, the galleys, the prison, and other kinds."

Assailed as to the use which he had made of the Koran, he replied that he had cited it for the greater "glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, because the said Koran abounds in what is good;" and that even though that book be bad, he might employ the good which it contained; "for in a wicked book one might find some good things." The charge was, in truth, absurd, and the answer was nothing more than just.—The examination closed with a question relative to a sojourn which Servetus had made in Italy before coming to Geneva, which he formally denied; and another concerning the circumstances of his arrival,

for which he referred to the testimony of the landlord of *the Rose*. The meeting then adjourned.

Three days thereafter, Thursday, 31st of August, the Little Council received an answer to the letter which it had addressed on the 22d to the Court of Vienne. The president and attorney of that district informed the Council, that it was not possible to grant its request as to communicating the papers in the process instituted at Vienne against Servetus, because, as that trial had terminated by a sentence of condemnation, they could "not concede or consent that another judgment should be passed," under pain of incurring the displeasure of the king. They contented themselves, therefore, with transmitting to the Syndics and Council a copy of the sentence of death pronounced against M. Servetus,* under the name of Villeneuve; and in their turn requested that the prisoner might be sent back to them, "to inflict the said sentence, the execution of which would punish him in such a way that there would be no need to seek other charges against him." In the expectation that the surrender of Servetus would be conceded, the magistrate and attorney had charged the officer or governor of the royal palace of Vienne, to whom they had given credentials, to reconduct him to that city.

A report upon these different points was made to the Council, which resolved, in reference to the remitting of Servetus, to cause write "a gracious letter, intimating that they could not give him up, but would do full justice upon him." We see here that the tribunal

* See this Sentence, Appendix, D.

of Geneva was provoked to emulation, and wished, at the very least, to have the appearance of understanding its business as well as others, without, however, pledging itself as to the final decision.*

* The following is the application from Vienne regarding Servetus:—

"A Nobles, Saiges, Spectables, et illustres Seigneurs les Scindicques et Conseil de Genève, à Genève.

"Messeigneurs, le jour dhier environ une heure apprès midy, nous receumes les lettres quil vous a pleu nous rescripre contenants advertissement de la prinse et détention de M.e Michiel Servet dict de Villeneufve en voz prisons, duquel advertissement nous vous mercions bien fort. Et à ceste cause, oultre la présente lettre laquelle nous avons bien voulu délivrer à vostre messagier, nous vous envoyons le viguier et cappiteyne du pallaix royal de Vienne, avec nos lettres patentes, et le double de la sentence, en dernier ressort contre ledict de Villeneufve donée, pour vous supplier bien humblement que, attendu quil estoit habitant du pays du Roy, et que les crimes pour lesquelz il a esté condamné ont esté commis dans lesdictz pays du Roy, et quil seroit évadé de nos prisons et par ainsi encores notre prisonnier, votre bon plaisir soit le nous rendre pour exéquuter ladicte sentence, lexéquution de laquelle le chastiera de sorte quil ne sera besoing chercher aultres charges contre luy. Et quant à ce quil vous plaist nous rescripre de vous envoyer la copie dudict procès pour procéder par dela contre luy, attendu ladicte sentence, de laquelle nous croyons bien que ayez esté iusques ici ignorans, nous vous supplions de nous excuser, veu que sur nosdictes actes et procédures ne pouvons permettre ou consentir que aultre jugement sen face, et si aultrement y consentions en serions reprins par le roy auquel, comme sommes asseurés, ferés plaisir très agréable en anvoyant ledict Villeneufve monstrer que vous entendez que les iugements de ses magistrats sortent leur effect, comme vous vous vouldries en cas pareil vos iugements estre exéquutés. Et de rechief, messeigneurs, par ceste présente nous vous prions bien fort vouloir ouyr ledict Viguier, et nous accorder ce que une iustice doibt accorder à l'autre. Et où, messeigneurs, nous aurons le moyen en tel cas, ou plus grand, vous rendre le semblable, nous le ferons si voluntiers et d'aussi bon cueur comme nous présentons nos

Further: the refusal to surrender the prisoner was agreeable to the precedents of the Council, as we may be convinced by reading its registers, where analogous cases are often found. Thus, three years before the period to which our attention is now turned (18th of April, 1550), this answer was given to the King of

humbles recommandations à vos bonnes grâces; et prions le Créateur vous avoir en saincte garde. De Vienne, ce samedi au seoir vingt sixiesme daoust 1553.

"Nous navons peu plustost despecher le présent pourteur pour labsence de nous vibailly.

"Vos bons voisins, frères et amys, les vibailly et procureur du roy au siége de Vienne.

"Par commandement de mesdicts seigneurs
les vibailly et procureur.

"CHASALIS, greffier."

The following is the reply from Geneva, addressed—"A Vienne.

"Aux Nobles, Saiges, Spectables et magniffiques Seigneurs les Vybailly et Procureur du Roy au siége de Vienne.

"Nobles, Saiges, Spectables, et magniffiques Seigneurs.

"Magniffiques Seigneurs, nous avons receu votre réponse par notre serviteur en l'affayre de Michel Servet, et vous mercions bien de bon cœur, du bon recueil avez à notre dict serviteur faict, avons en après ouys votre viguier et capitaine du palays royal et veu lextraict et exploitz quil nous a monstrez touchant ledict affaire: quoy faict avons voluntier faict veoir ledict prisounier audict vigier affin il vous puisse raporter si cest pas cestuy la quest esté en voz prisons, et lavons à sa requeste interrogué de sa sortie, quest ce en quoy lavons peu pour lamour de vous gratiffier. Car de nous puys quavons trouvé ledict Servet rière nous chargé de crime nous ne pouvons icelluy aultre part remettre. Mais sumes en tout délibéré propos pour notre debvoir dycelluy suyvre selon ce quen avons trouvé et en faire ce que bonne iustice portera. Et pourtant vous prions avoir de cela notre responce pour agréable, et croyre quen aultre chose à nous possible de très bon cœur vous vouldrions faire plaisir quest lendroit où nous prions le Créateur quil luy plaise vous augmenter en ses grâces. De Genève ce 31 daugst 1553."

France, who asked the surrender of a prisoner who was accused of having abstracted one hundred and forty thousand francs from the public treasury: "According to our ancient usages, when we hold a prisoner charged with crimes, he never escapes from our hands till we have pronounced in his case a sentence either of acquittal or condemnation, especially when there are accusers. We are sorry that we cannot on this occasion gratify the king; but as for what remains, he may be assured that we shall do all justice." In 1552 (22d July), a similar refusal, for the same reason, was given to the Senate of Chamberry. It was thus a principle of Genevese justice not to remit to another jurisdiction than its own the accused who fell into its hands, even when the crimes imputed to them were committed beyond its territory. The Council did not wish to abandon its practice in the present instance; and it is this claim of competency which secured to Geneva, rather than Vienne, the melancholy privilege of burning Servetus.

The latter could not doubt, however, that in either city there remained for him, after his prison-house, only a funeral pile; for when he had been confronted with the officer under whose custody he had been imprisoned at Vienne, "do you prefer," they asked him, "to remain here in the hands of my Lords, or to be sent back with this jailer who has come to demand you?" Upon which, throwing himself on the ground, and weeping, he implored them to try him at Geneva, offering to submit to the good pleasure of their Lordships, but asking, above all, that they would not send

him back to Vienne. This was, amid two evils, to shun the more certain. *There*, the wood-pile was all prepared; *here*, hope was not yet definitively lost.

The Council being thus assembled at the prison, embraced the opportunity to question Servetus again on the details of the process at Vienne, on his flight from the prisons of that town, and his intercourse in Geneva with people in the city. The accused formally denied this last point, declaring that he had spoken to none "but those within the prison who had brought him food, and that they had even nailed down his windows." These precautions, like those already mentioned, prove the existence of facts which rendered them necessary. If the prisoner had not had intercourse with some in the city, his keepers would not thus have sought to render it impossible.

After being questioned again as to his opinion regarding the mass, which he said "he reckoned wicked," and upon his practice of being present at its celebration in Vienne, Servetus replied that he did so after the example of St Paul, who went to the temple like the Jews; but confessed that in doing so he had sinned through the fear of death. He was again confronted with the officer from Vienne, from whom he declared "he had never received any favour or aid" in escaping from prison. The officer having asked a certificate of that declaration, it was immediately granted. But we have not yet done with the people of Vienne.

On the next day, 1st of September, yet another letter came from that city, starting a new inquiry concerning

the prisoner. That letter, written by M. de Maugiron, lieutenant-general of the king of France, in Dauphiné, informed the magistrates that the goods of Servetus, amounting in value to four thousand crowns, had been confiscated by his majesty, and bestowed on the son of the said M. de Maugiron; but in order to be put in possession, it was necessary to know the creditors of Servetus, and to have their accounts in hand. With that design, M. de Maugiron asked the Council to question the prisoner, and if it found him possessed of any bills and obligations, "to communicate them to him by all means, in a little memorandum, containing the names and surnames of the debtors, the sums, and the agents who had passed them." Further: the noble correspondent, forgetting a little the medical aid which Servetus had rendered to him, or wishing perhaps to clear himself from the suspicion of having favoured his escape from Vienne, declared that he was very happy to learn that he was in the hands of the magistrates of Geneva; and he "blessed God for the assurance which he had that they would take better care than the ministers of justice at Vienne had done, and do such justice as that he would not have the means of again teaching, writing, or publishing his false, heretical doctrines." This appeal to the self-esteem of the Council of Geneva contributed, perhaps, along with the desire of rivalling in severity a Catholic tribunal, to bring in at last a sentence of condemnation against Servetus. Who knows, in fact, to what extent the fear of appearing worse Christians, and less scrupulous magistrates

than the people of Vienne, operated on the minds of the Genevese judges?*

But if the letter of M. de Maugiron had some influence in this respect, it did not accomplish the object for which it had been specially written. Servetus utterly refused, for the sake of his debtors, to make known the nature of his credits, whose detail, he said, did not affect "the principal cause;" for which he was imprisoned. The Court did not insist further. Amied Perrin and Berthelier protected Servetus by their presence; and an answer was politely sent to M. de Maugiron that they could draw nothing from the prisoner, but that if ever they obtained any statement from him, the information would be immediately transmitted.†

* We again perceive from the reasoning of Rilliet, to what influences he traces the final condemnation of Servetus. It has hitherto been ascribed solely to the remorseless implacability of Calvin—with what truth may now appear.—Tr.

† It appears from the Registers of Council (30th October 1553), that among the papers of Servetus there were found "two notes of acknowledgment;" that is to say, two holograph vouchers, such as M. de Maugiron desired, but it does not appear that they were transmitted. The following is the correspondence with the Council:—

"A messieurs les Scindicques et Consulz de Genefve mes bons voisins et amys.

"Messieurs, ie suis adverty que vous tenez prisonnier ung nommé Michiel Servet surnommé de Villeneufve, de quoy ie suis très aise et en loue Dieu pour lassurance que iay que vous en ferez meilleure garde que nont fait les ministres de iustice de Vyenne, et telle iustice quil naura plus moyen de docgmatiser, escripre et publier ses faulces héréticques doctrines. Et pour ce messieurs que ie vous ay tousiours congneu mes bons amys, ie vous veulx bien advertir que le Roy a donné à ung myen filz tous les biens et deniers appar-

The double incident thus occurring during the process, arising out of demands from Vienne, furnished the last occasion of interrogating Servetus, and formed the close of the second phase of his trial. The public functionary had terminated his prosecution; and it seemed as if nothing more remained to be expected but the decision of the tribunal, condemning or acquitting the prisoner. It appeared, however, that the Little Council did not reckon itself sufficiently convinced of the guilt of Servetus, and that the manner in which he had conducted his own defence at the later examinations, had occasioned some indecision in the mind of the judges. Whether it was of its own accord, and to obtain new light, or whether it was at the request of Calvin, who desired to procure from

tenans audict Servet qui sont de III ou IIII ∇ (mille écus), ainsi quon dict, et quil les avoit en bancque; mais toutesfois depuis quil sabsenta des prisons de Vyenne, lon na peu vériffier ses debtes parcequil emporta les cédules et obligations, tellement que ceulx qui luy doibvent maintenant luy demandent. A ceste cause, messieurs, ie vous prie bien affectionnement quil vous plaise me faire ce plaisir, et à mon filz le bien, dinterroger ledict Servet sur sesdictes debtes, tellement quilz puissent estre illusidés et mis en lumière; et si vous lavez trouvé saisi daulcunes cédules ou obligations sur aulcungs de subgects du Roy résidans en son obéissance, men faire part à tout le moyns par ung petit mémoire contenant les noms et surnoms des débiteurs, les sommes, et les notaires qui les ont passées. Vous assurant, messieurs, que le plaisir me ferez en cela ie le recognoistray pour vous ou pour les votres, si iamais me voullez employer. Cest lendroict, messieurs, où ie me recommande à vos bonnes grâces, et prie le Créateur quil vous donne en santé heureuses et longues vyes. De Beauvoir, ce XXIX.e jour daoust 1553.

"Votre voisin et bien bon amy
MOGIRON."

[Et plus bas] "De la Tour."

Servetus the disavowal of his errors,* the Little Council decided to confront the prisoner and the ministers once more, to hear them in their discussion with each other, and thus to arrive at a conclusion. This interview took place at the same sitting where Servetus had been interrogated at the request of M. de Maugiron; but instead of preserving the forms previously observed, the debate changed its character; the oral proceeding was succeeded by a written discussion, where the irritation of Servetus, for a brief period pent up, re-appeared with greater violence, and gave a new aspect to his trial. This unexpected turn was contemporaneous with an event with which it must of necessity connect itself, and of which we are now to give an account.

* *Declaration*, p. 1338.

CHAPTER VI.

WRITTEN DISCUSSION BETWEEN SERVETUS AND CALVIN —DEBATES UPON EXCOMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE REFORMER AND THE COUNCIL.

On the morning of the day (1st September) on which Servetus had again been confronted with Calvin, the Little Council had granted an audience to Philibert Berthelier, who wished to solicit their warrant to partake of the sacrament of the supper, in spite of the prohibition of the Consistory. After he had presented this request, Calvin, who, on his part, had desired to be heard upon the point, strongly opposed such a pretension, and conjured the magistracy not to grant Berthelier a warrant which was expressly contrary to the Edicts of the Republic, according to which the Little Council possessed no power concerning excommunication. The opposition of the Reformer was unsuccessful; and in spite of his protestations, the Council replied to Berthelier, that "if he felt himself clear in his conscience, and fit to receive the sacrament, and purposing to leave past events out of view, he might partake of it; and they left him to do so or not, on his own responsibility."

This resolution, in which the magistrate, by a strange confusion, constituted himself a director of the conscience, reversed the whole system of ecclesiastical discipline established by Calvin, and plainly manifested the dislike which the Little Council bore to him. He considered it, in effect, as a triumph of his enemies, due to the influence of their leader, Amied Perrin, under whose presidentship at the Council the resolution had been adopted.

Some hours after it had been agreed on, the criminal investigation was resumed in the prison, where Calvin appeared with his colleagues. He beheld among the judges his two antagonists, Perrin and Berthelier, flushed with their recent victory, while Servetus saw in them his two defenders. The discussion was opened upon the theological questions already often debated, but it was interrupted at the commencement by the act of Servetus, says Calvin;* by the act of the judges, says the minute of the meeting; we say, by the deed of each. The oral debate had obviously not been favourable to the Spaniard, who was not a match for the Reformer in argument, and who felt himself more free and more eloquent when he held his pen. He must therefore attempt this new mode of defence, and his wish found support and countenance from his protectors, who strove to supply him with the means of resisting their common adversary with greater success. The triumph of the morning had begun the struggle; it was now the interest of the Libertine leaders to employ all kinds

* See *Epist. ad Viretum*, 4th September 1553; *ad Bullingerum*, 25th October, 1553; *ad Eccles. Tigur.*, 26th November, 1553.

of weapons in their defence, in the hope of harassing the Reformer. They behoved to restore to Servetus the support of which they had for a brief period deprived him; and by fomenting his resistance to Calvin, to raise difficulties in his way, which would render him a less formidable antagonist to themselves.

The written discussion had, in effect, the advantage, not merely of procuring for Servetus greater facility for self-defence, but protracting the affair and complicating the position of Calvin, already become so critical. The protectors of the prisoner wished—and it was, without doubt, at their instigation that he himself made the demand*—that his affair should be referred to the Churches of Switzerland, who, in the case of Bolsec, had shown themselves much more moderate than Calvin. For a contrary reason, he was anxious that that reference should not be made,† though he did not venture openly to oppose it.‡ However that may be, he was not mistaken as to the causes which led to the preference given to the written form of discussion. He also understood that the refusal of the oral debate by Servetus, arose from the encouragements held out by the leaders of the anti-Calvin party. "He did not vouchsafe to explain the proposal; from which there arises a probable conjecture that he had fabricated for himself some vain confidence from I know not whom."‖ Calvin would have spoken more plainly, if he had not, at the time when he published his work on Servetus, been recon-

* Calvin affirms it.—*Declaration*, p. 1357.

† See below, his letter to Bullinger, of 7th September.

‡ *Declaration*, p. 1337. ‖ *Declaration*, p. 1338.

ciled for a little to those to whom he made allusion. But he explained himself concerning them in a way that admits of no doubt, when he wrote to the Church of Zurich, on the 16th November 1553: "Berthelier has for protectors and accomplices those who have not been ashamed loudly to defend the cause of Servetus."

Moreover, what demonstrates, with the clearest evidence, the hope which the prisoner placed in the power of his protectors, is the language which he from that time adopted; and the open, furious, mortal war which he waged against the Reformer, now become the object of his direct attacks. Servetus threw himself, with all the ardour of a man who believed himself well-nigh sure of victory, into a path where, by his own confession, he wished to pursue his opponent, "even till the cause be terminated by the death of him or me." The contest, for a moment suspended, while Servetus, abandoned by his friends, thought only of rendering both himself and his doctrines innocuous, is resumed under countenance of the antipathy which the Little Council bore to Calvin. The position of the latter was difficult: he displayed in it all his powers and the most astonishing energy; for nothing contributed to his grandeur so much as debate. It added also to the talent of Servetus; but his mind and his animosity could not hold in check the indomitable soul of his opponent.

At the meeting where they stood face to face, the Little Council, without entering on the discussion, decided that Calvin should extract, and give in, written in Latin, "the articles, word for word, which

are in the book of the said Servetus." After this step these articles were to be communicated to the prisoner, who was to give in his answers and vindications also in Latin, that the discussion might be intelligible to the Swiss Churches: Calvin, in his turn, was to furnish replies. In this manner the state of the case, and the arguments on either side, were to be plainly set forth,* and at this stage we cannot but commend the impartiality of the Council.

On the same day, Calvin, in obedience to the order of the Council, extracted thirty-eight propositions from the work of Servetus, which he was content to reproduce, according to the injunction given to him, with the references, according to the text, without either combating or refuting them. All that he did was to prefix the following note: "Articles extracted from the books of M. Servetus, which the ministers of the Word of God in the Church of Geneva produce, being prepared to maintain that these propositions are in part blasphemous; and in part full of errors and profane reveries. Further, that they are utterly repugnant to the Word of God, and the common consent of the universal Church." The articles censured were no other, it was understood, than those which had already been mentioned in the oral proceedings, and as they had been promptly prepared by Calvin, they were forthwith sent to Servetus, to receive his reply.

While he was occupied in that work, Calvin, proceeding from one adversary to another, left the heretic,

* All these parts of the written debate are found translated into French, in the *Declaration*, pp. 1357-1388.

to combat on an arena where the least delay might have occasioned his defeat.

In fact, the excommunication of Berthelier, cancelled by the Little Council, was an affair which, to the Reformer's mind, took precedence of every other, and which he behoved to prevent from being so disposed of as to injure ecclesiastical discipline. Hence, as soon as Calvin had obeyed the order of the magistrates regarding the enumeration of the errors of Servetus, he must hasten to concentrate all his attention on the excommunicated. Time pressed; for it was on the day after the morrow (Lord's-day, the 3d of September) that Berthelier, strong in the countenance of the civil power, calculated on presenting himself at the holy table, there to brave the authority of the Reformer, and humble him in the eyes of all the flock. Calvin did not hesitate to follow up the resistance which he had offered in vain to the sentence of the magistrates; and with that design he went to the Syndics, boldly to ask an instant meeting of the Little Council. After many endeavours he obtained his demand; and the Council was summoned for Saturday, the 2d of September.

Calvin appeared, and protesting with energy against the decision of the previous evening in favour of Berthelier, he denounced it as contrary to the Edicts of the Republic. Alternately employing vehemence and moderation, he strives to lead back the magistrates to sentiments more in harmony with his views. He declares that he would die rather than tolerate, contrary to his conscience, the presence of an ex-

communicated man at the sacred table — he conjures the Council not to adhere to its decree, nor to employ violence towards him, but rather to afford support in an affair where he acted for the good of the Church, and according to the sacred duty of the ministry. After Calvin, they hear the Consistory, which employs the same language. But their Lordships did not alter their resolution; and in their official answer declared that they continued to Berthelier the warrant which they had formerly granted.

The indignation of Calvin is at its height, but his resolution is unchanged—if Berthelier presents himself at the communion, Calvin will, on his part, venture to refuse the sacrament. This inflexible perseverance of the Reformer led the Council to fear a very serious collision, and, to prevent it, they resolved secretly to advise Berthelier to abstain from appearing at the holy table.* Thus, while maintaining its decision, the Council prevented the effect—the principle was preserved, but the struggle was avoided. Calvin, who did not know the secret advice given to Berthelier, prepared for the combat with the only arms he could employ—the power of his eloquence and the moral authority of his word. The thunders of the Christian pulpit remained as his only resource, and he prepared to launch them.†

* "Nevertheless, it will be well to advise the said Berthelier, if he can, to abstain from taking and receiving it for the present; and that this be done privately."—*Registers of Council, 2d September* 1553.

† It was, then, by a mean artifice that the magistrates of Geneva here accomplished their object, viz., the subordination of the spiri-

To conquer or die in a cause which he reckoned sacred, was, in Calvin's eyes, the only alternative worthy of his mission in Geneva; and it was with that thought that, on the morning of the Lord's-day, 3d September, he began the discourse which preceded the solemn act of the communion in the Temple of St Peter. A numerous assemblage, disquieted and agitated by contrary opinions, had come to take part in that solemn contest, where the lot of Geneva was at stake, since it had reference to that of Calvin. No one could be in doubt regarding it; for the Reformer did not disguise either his resolution to repel from the supper the communicant whom the Council, in contempt of the Consistory, had sent to it, or his purpose, in case of a failure, to abandon Geneva for ever.

His language was characterized by a noble boldness. "As for myself," said he, "while God shall keep me here, since he has given me constancy, and I have taken it from him, I will use it, whatever may occur. I will govern myself only according to the law of my Master, which is altogether clear and notorious. As we are now about to receive the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, if any one who has been debarred by the Consistory shall approach this table, it is

tual to the civil power. Contrary to the constitution of the Republic, they had done what was beyond their province, and injustice led to cowardice. They could not stand by the results of their own act, and clandestinely prevailed on the excommunicated man to wave his privilege. But, in the meantime, their usurpation was sanctioned by a precedent, and a more favourable opportunity might occur for completely achieving their object.—Tr.

certain that, though it should cost my life, I will show myself such as I ought to be." *

When Calvin descended from the pulpit, after his discourse, to distribute the sacred elements to the faithful, Berthelier did not appear, and the Reformer might regard himself as triumphant. But the prudence of the Council had probably done more than his eloquent words, and he speedily knew to what he must ascribe his success. The magistrates had sought to avoid a scandal, and not to secure a brilliant victory to Calvin; and he, aware of the ever hostile feelings of which he was the object, far from seeing in the absence of Berthelier a subject for triumph, believed that he found in it, on the contrary, the cause of an approaching exile. On the afternoon of the same day, re-ascending the pulpit, he communicated the troubles of his soul to his hearers in these words, as full of dignity as of sadness:—

"I must declare to you that I know not but this may be the last sermon I shall preach in Geneva; not because I take leave of my own accord—God forbid that I should wish to abandon the sphere of my rightful authority!—but I take what has happened as if it had been declared that they will be no longer served by me. And thus, since they will not allow me to do what, in my conscience, I feel to be duty, and would constrain me to do what is not lawful according to God, it is impossible that I, for my part, can go

* The sermon from which this passage is taken is not found in the manuscript collection of the public library, where the discourses of the year 1553 are awanting. This quotation, and the following, are taken from the unpublished History of Geneva by Gautier.

further. As long as I am at liberty to preach and serve you, I will do it in the name of God; but when they impose on me an intolerable condition, I will not, as said St Ambrose, resist those that are in power."

In all this, Calvin thought less of himself than of his work; and in spite of his resistance, and the absence of Berthelier, he did not flatter himself with success. The opposition of his enemies left him little hope; but he was resolved never to yield to them. This is what he wrote to his friend Viret the day after his sermons at St Peter's: "The disaffected may now obtain the object of their desires. As for me, what very naturally torments me is the calamity to the Church. If God permit Satan to crush the liberty of my ministry under such a despotism, all is at an end with me. He who has inflicted the wound will find a remedy. But behold the long years during which impunity in crime goes on increasing; and God perhaps prepares some judgment, whose execution I am not worthy to contemplate. At all events it is our duty to submit to his will, whatever it may be. Pray for this unhappy Church."

A mind less firm, a character less boldly tempered than that of the Reformer, could not have resisted the mournful emotions and the increasing hostility which assailed him—he made head against them all. Grappling with two adversaries at once, Calvin maintained the double struggle. On the one hand, he resisted Berthelier and the Council, in the pulpit; on the other, he combated in writing the exculpatory answers of Servetus, and presented to the Council, on Tuesday

the 5th of September, the "Brief Refutation of his Errors and Impieties."

The Spaniard had made haste to reply to the charges contained in the thirty-eight articles prepared against him. Twenty-four hours had sufficed to draw up a pleading at once apologetic and hostile, in which he justified his own opinions, and keenly combated Calvin. Knowing him to be engaged in an arduous struggle, Servetus wished to raise up one obstacle more; and in thus seconding the enemies of the Reformer, to secure for himself a more favourable chance. In that document, prepared in haste, but exhibiting great clearness of understanding and keen exasperation, he employs as much precision in explaining his views as violence and bitterness in attacking Calvin.

At the commencement he contemptuously repels the Reformer's interference in the debate, and clearly states the question. "Already," says he, "Calvin claims such an authority that he frames articles in the style of the doctors of the Sorbonne. He does not understand my opinion, or he craftily distorts it. All my aim," continues Servetus, "has been to declare, that the name of *Son* is properly attributed in Scripture to Jesus Christ as man. If, then, the Scripture always takes it in that sense, we must also take it. I have said," he further adds, "that the second person in the Godhead has been so named in ancient times, because that was an exhibition or representation of the man Jesus Christ, who already, by hypostasis, existed in God, and shone forth visibly in the Godhead." *

* The French of this sentence is as follows: "J'ay dit que la

This is a more frank exposition than any that Servetus has yet made as to his doctrine regarding the Son of God. Ambiguities in language disappear from his pen in proportion as his confidence in the supporters of his cause increases.

To justify the sense which he gave to the word *person*, in which he saw, like the Platonists, a kind of pre-existing *idea* which prefigured the future Christ, and not, like the Church, a distinct subsistence, having its proper life in the bosom of the divine essence, and subsequently incarnate in the man Jesus, Servetus cites passages from Tertullian, Irenæus, and St Clement, favourable, in his view, to the interpretation which he proposes. After that, resuming the articles drawn up by Calvin, he undertakes to answer them in succession, and commences thus: "The title makes me marvel at the impudence of the man who boasts of being a Catholic, although he is a disciple of Simon the magician, as I have evidently shown in my Apology. Who will say that a prosecutor * and a homicide is a true minister of the Church?"

To treat Calvin thus within the walls of a prison, was to be very sure of victory—to rush into a path, at the end of which the defeat of his adversary seemed almost to be certain. Circumstances warranted this hope of Servetus, so that in all that followed of his defence, he addressed himself directly to Calvin, as if

seconde personne en la Dieté a esté jadis ainsi nommée, pourceque c'estoit une monstre ou representation de l'homme Jesus Christ, lequel desia par hypostase subsistoit en Dieu, et reluisoit visiblement en la Dieté.—Tr.

* Accusateur Criminel.—Tr.

he had no longer any terms to keep with him, and apostrophizes him thus, from his pride of place: "You do not know what you say—you are a wretch, if you persist in condemning what you do not understand. Did you think to stun the ears of the judges by your barking? You have a confused intellect, so that you cannot understand the truth. Wretch! perverted by Simon Magus, you are ignorant of the first principles of things—you make men only blocks of wood and stone by establishing the slavery of the will."

Moreover, far from equivocating or resorting to subterfuges, as in the oral debate, Servetus expressly grants the opinions that were imputed to him, and his brief and proud replies are altogether in harmony with the state of mind which the rest of his apologetic plea betrays. Already he believed Calvin to be dethroned, and saw himself placed in safety. The opposition of the Council in favour of Berthelier had turned the head of Servetus.

Calvin, as we have said, wholly occupied as he was with the controversy against the magistrates, which was then at its height, did not lose an instant in repelling the vindication and attacks of the heretic, and replying to him, as he had already been authorized by the judges to do. This reply, which occupies twenty-three folio pages, was prepared in two days; it bears the signature of all the ministers of the Church of Geneva, to the number of fourteen. The form is prolix, and follows the memorial of Servetus, which it refutes step by step, not without launching against

the author epithets analogous to those which he had hurled against Calvin. Yet the aim of the latter was to act, in this respect, differently from his antagonist. "If Servetus," he says, "had not in the first instance called Calvin a homicide, and had not uttered violent invectives against him, he feared that he might not have appeared a sufficiently powerful haranguer in outrages. For our part, we will simply treat of the matter under discussion." In spite of this declaration, injurious words against Servetus are not spared; but these were a coin so current in those days, that instead of being deemed excessive, they fell from the pen without observation. The conclusion of this reply contains the most grievous outrage. "Whoever," says Calvin, "will calmly weigh, and prudently consider these things, may clearly see that Servetus had no other end but to extinguish the light which we have from the Word of God, so as to abolish all religion."

Governed by absolute convictions, which controversy rendered still more exclusive, the Reformer might believe that, in speaking thus, he only spoke the truth. But we who judge calmly at a distance, cannot subscribe to this charge. On the contrary, it appears to us unjust and false, because it charges Servetus with intentions quite contrary to his real designs. In his book, he had sought to accomplish a serious work, and was animated by a profound respect and sincere faith in Christianity, as he understood it. The revelation contained in Scripture formed, in his eyes, the supreme and sacred rule in religious questions, upon which the Holy Spirit alone could enlighten the un-

derstanding; Christ was his Master, his Saviour, and his God. If he understood the mysteries of divine ontology differently from the Reformers—if he quarrelled with them on the subject of baptism—if he did not attach himself exclusively to justification by faith—if he often professed strange theories—his aim was not to destroy the Gospel institution in the spirit of hostile incredulity. One may, with reason, deny the justness of his opinions, and the moral force of his character; but nothing permits us to suspect him of perversity. What passes now for perhaps a respectable error was then called heresy, and reckoned equivalent to a crime.*

The enemies of Calvin are, in this respect, as decided as himself; and Bolsec, whom the Reformer had caused to be banished from Geneva for his attack on the doctrine of predestination, expresses himself on the subject of Servetus with even less moderation than their common adversary did. He declares that he felt "no displeasure at the death of so obstinate and monstrous an heretic, for he was utterly vile, and unworthy of the society of men; and I would wish that all who aid him were exterminated, and the Church of our Lord well purified from such vermin."† Bolsec had then re-entered the pale of the Romish Church, and had conceived the blindest hatred against Calvin. Let us return to our trial.

The different documents in the written debate,

* Such are the reasonings of Rilliet. He does not understand the grounds of Calvin's charge.—Tr.

† Bolsec. *Vie de Calvin*, chap. iv.

namely, the list of articles extracted from the books of Servetus, his vindication, and the refutation by Calvin, were presented together to the Council on Tuesday the 5th of September. They contained the essence of the discussion, as far as regards the theological question; and, in that respect, serve as a basis for judgment in the written process. That judgment behoved to be pronounced by the Swiss Churches, to which the magistrates, as we have already mentioned, had decided to have recourse for further light, even before Servetus had expressed a desire for their interposition in his trial. But the proposal to consult them through the medium of the Treasurer, Claud du Pan, who proceeded to Switzerland, having been adopted at the same sitting, the Council adjourned the consideration, "in order (says the Register) that the process may be thoroughly examined, with the said articles and replies," in order (history must say) that as the affair of the excommunication was not yet adjusted, they might keep Calvin by all means in check. The Lord Treasurer was then allowed to depart [from the meeting of Council], and other two weeks rolled away before the judges definitely resolved to consult the Churches of Berne, Bâle, Shaffhausen, and Zurich, regarding the guilt of Servétus.

During the interval, Calvin, who foresaw that the affair would be brought under their notice, hastened to inform the leading pastors of those Churches of the state of matters; and on the 7th of September he wrote to Bullinger, the leader of that of Zurich: "In a little, the Council will send the opinions of

Servetus to obtain your advice. It is in spite of us that they have given you this trouble;* but they have arrived at that pitch of madness and rage, that they look with suspicion on all that we say. Were I to declare that it is day at high-noon, they would immediately begin to doubt it. Our brother Walther (the son-in-law of Bullinger) will tell you more."

This letter clearly describes the situation of Calvin, and his relation to the Council. It shows, at the same time, that the appeal to the Churches proceeded altogether from distrust of the Reformer, and a leaning toward Servetus. The latter was not ignorant of all that; but if he rested his hope on such a basis, Calvin, discomposed for a little, soon hastened to overthrow it, though his confessions to Walther betray the most profound discouragement. The answer of Bullinger, received a few days thereafter, proves it: "The recital of Walther," he says, "has rendered me sad and restless. Do not abandon, I conjure you, a Church which contains so many excellent men. Ever support the cause of the elect; think of the joy which your withdrawment would occasion to the enemies of Reform, and with what dangers it would be accompanied to the French refugees. Moreover, the Lord will not forsake you. He has presented to the very mighty Council of Geneva a most favourable opportunity to cleanse both it and the Council from the pollution of heresy, by delivering into its hands the Spaniard, Servetus. If they treat him as he deserves for being an impudent blasphemer, the whole world will declare that the

* Calvin's words are, "*Nobis quidem reclamantibus.*"

Genevese abhor the impious; that they pursue, with the sword of justice, heretics that are really obstinate; and that they thus maintain the glory of the Divine Majesty. At all events, even though they should not act thus, you ought not, by abandoning that Church, to expose it to new misfortunes."

The suggestions of Bullinger show the extent of Calvin's dejection; and his letter, written after Walther had apprized him of the state of feeling at Geneva, enables us to perceive that the condemnation of Servetus might then be considered problematical. For this reason, Calvin, who would have preferred to proceed directly against the Spaniard, whose guilt was not doubtful in his eyes, endeavoured, as soon as the Council resolved to consult referees, to gain these to his opinion, and to induce them to give sentence accordingly, called in as they were in his despite. Hence his letter to Bullinger, by means of which he would have influenced the Churches of Zurich and Schaffhausen; hence, also, that which he addressed two days later to Sulzer, a pastor of the Church of Bâle, of whose support he might have some doubt, because it had shown itself less strict and less decided than he desired in its judgment regarding Bolsec.*

He, moreover, forcibly pleads with Sulzer, in order to establish the proved guilt of Servetus. He asks him to depict his impiety in lively colours, and depend on the testimony of the Treasurer Du Pan, the bearer of

* Let Ministres de Bâle ont envoyé leur réponse et nous avons vu combien peu il fallait compter sur eux.—*Calvin a Fabri, Nov.* 28, 1552.

the letter, "who," said Calvin, "is very well disposed in this matter, and will not shrink from the result which we desire. May it please God," he adds, "that your elder disciples may be animated by the same spirit." These words betray the Reformer's distrust of the Bernese pastors, with a portion of whom he differed on certain points of doctrine, while they had professed principles of great toleration in their opinions regarding Bolsec.*

If Calvin suffered at the thought of perhaps not meeting with sufficient support abroad, he found in the sympathy of his friend Farel, enough to re-encourage him; for the keenness of the latter at least equalled that of Calvin himself.

"This arrival of Servetus at Geneva," wrote the pastor of Neuchatel, "is an admirable dispensation of God.—May he come to repentance, however tardy! It will certainly be a great marvel to see him enduring death in a spirit of sincere conversion, and endeavouring to edify the beholders—him who has sought to destroy so many souls! Yes, the judges will be cruel and hostile to Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness; they will be the true enemies of the Church, if they continue insensible to the horrible blasphemies by which that execrable heretic assails the Divine Majesty, endeavours to overthrow the Gospel of Christ, and to corrupt all the Churches. But I hope that God will teach those who know so well to punish robbers and the sacrilegious,† to act in

* An extract of that opinion will be found at a subsequent page.

† This was one of the strongholds of those who argued for capital punishment in matters of heresy. You punish, they said, the viola-

this matter in such a way as to secure deserved approbation; and that they will put the man to death who has so obstinately persisted in his heresies, and destroyed so large a number of souls. Your desire to mitigate the rigour of the punishment, is the service of a friend rendered to one who is your mortal enemy; but I beseech you so to act as that no one shall hereafter seek, with impunity, to publish novel doctrines, and to embroil us all as Servetus has done. You see that insolent heretic, Jerome Bolsec, who, though often convinced, has never yet returned to reason—the clemency of the judges, rather than equity, diverting them from their duty, has not merely injured him, but very many more.* As for the rest, nothing of all this escapes you; but there are some people who wish to let heretics escape, as if there were no difference between the functions of a pastor and those of a magistrate. Because the Pope condemns the faithful for the crimes of heresy—because enraged judges subject the innocent to the punishments which are reserved for heretics, it is absurd to conclude that these last should not be put to death, that their impunity may

tors of man's law and man's rights—will you allow those to escape who violate God's, and so make his word of none effect?—Tr.

* In 1547, Alphonso a Castra, in his book *De Justâ Hereticorum Punitione*, said, like Farel: "If Martin Luther, when he began to spread his poison, had been put to death as he deserved, we had not seen all these heresies spreading which now distract Germany; and it would have been better for him to perish by the sword or fire, than deepen the just vengeance of God by persisting in his errors.—*Book* ii. chap. 12. [We have already seen enough to show us the harmony that prevailed on this subject among all the Churches, Protestant as well as Popish.—Tr.]

be a guarantee to the faithful. For me, I have often declared, that I am ready to die if I have taught anything whatever contrary to sound doctrine; and I add, that I would deserve the most frightful punishments if I turned any one aside from the faith of Christ. I cannot, then, apply to others a different rule.*. . . .— *Neuchatel, September* 8, 1553."

The natural impetuosity of Farel is conspicuous in this letter, and its whole contents clearly exhibit the opinions which godly and sincere men then entertained regarding culpability in a matter of faith. In the domain of Christian convictions, they, without scruple, sacrificed freedom of thought to what they reckoned the truth—the rights of the latter, in their minds, took precedence of those of the former. In their eyes, of all crimes the most atrocious is the spiritual murder of souls, while vengeance should not be left to God, since that would be, by postponing the punishment, to increase and prolong the influence of the evil. These principles, which do not accord at all with the theory of free inquiry in religious questions, animated Calvin, and encouraged him to pursue Servetus even to the utmost.

But, for the moment, what pressed the most was to terminate the dispute that had arisen between the Little Council and the ministers on the subject of excommunication. Accordingly, on Thursday the 7th of September, Calvin and his colleagues came to lay

* Perhaps this letter of Farel may be regarded as exhibiting, in a short compass, both the strength and the weakness of the cause which he advocates.—Tr.

before the magistrates an official complaint, under the form of a remonstrance against the warrant granted by them to Berthelier. The words of the ministers were severe and stringent—the reply of the Council was sharp—it said: "That the magistrates are trustworthy; that they have given no occasion to complain of them; and that the ministers should not return to address them any more. It is resolved, that they must produce the passage of the Edicts which they pretend bears them out." The next day, the ministers quoted the text of the Ecclesiastical Ordonnances, according to which, in their opinion, excommunication depended solely on the Consistory, as a religious body, and not at all upon the civil power.

During some days the Council, unable to reconcile its sentence in favour of Berthelier with the letter of the Edicts, remained silent and adopted no resolution. This silence irritated Calvin, who wished their Lordships at once to declare themselves, that his own conduct might be guided according to their resolution; and he threatened to discontinue his functions as a minister, unless they came to a prompt decision. The assembled ministers then deputed to the Council, on Friday the 15th of September, James Bernard and Abel Popin, who demanded, in name of all, a definitive reply. The magistrates took three days to give it; "and, in the meantime," adds the Register, "we must command M. Calvin, that while waiting for that settlement, he must preach and do his duty."

Calvin must therefore ascend the pulpit on the

Lord's-day, the 17th of September, and on Monday the Council passed a resolution, declaring "that it would adhere to the Edicts, as it had hitherto done." This ambiguous decision adjourned the debate without closing it, since it hinged entirely on the mode of interpreting the Edicts; but it was received by Calvin as being rather favourable to his views. At heart, the Little Council had no object in view but to leave the whole question undecided, and to wait for a decision till the ordinary meeting of the Council of Two Hundred. The apparent success of the Reformer was consequently only of short duration; for, two months thereafter, the Grand Council gave judgment in favour of the executive power, and solemnly conceded to the magistrates supreme authority in matters affecting excommunication. But the affair of Servetus was over when this new decision was given, and we are not, therefore, called on to consider it here. We must return to the prisoner, who was groaning in the jail, whilst the question of ecclesiastical discipline was discussed between the magistrates and the ministers.

Servetus groaned, but it was from impatience rather than alarm, if we may judge from the petition which he addressed to the Council on the 15th of September. This request forms a striking contrast with that which he had presented three weeks before, when he thought only of escaping from the affair at any cost. It is couched in a spirit of retaliation quite in accordance with the disposition which had animated him ever since he knew the critical position of Calvin. Without disguise he singled out the Reformer as his persecutor,

both as having prompted his arrestment, and prepared the requisition of the public functionary. He reiterated the demand for an advocate, and asked his trial to be transferred to the Council of Two Hundred, to which he appealed. This last request further shows that suggestions had been made to Servetus from without. A stranger in Geneva, it is obvious that the existence of the Two Hundred in the Republic, and above all, the hostile feelings of the majority of its members against Calvin, had been made known to him. His patrons must have described the success of his appeal as possible; he must, in a word, have been informed of events transpiring outside his prison by some powerful friends. The jailer or *Soudan*, named Claude de Geneve, a member of the Libertine party, and devoted to its leaders,* was probably the medium by which Perrin and Berthelier availed themselves (if they were not so employed in person) to convey to Servetus, whether for his sake or their own, directions which tended more and more to embarrass their common enemy. The petition necessarily presupposes this collusion. It was thus conceived:—

"My Right Honourable Lords,—I very humbly supplicate that you would be pleased to shorten these long delays, or discharge me as not guilty. You see that Calvin is nonplussed, not knowing what to say, while, for his pleasure, he seeks to make me perish here in prison. Fleas eat me alive; my hose are torn; and I have not wherewith to change—neither doublet, nor shirt, but one that is ragged. I presented to you an-

* *Bonnivard*, De l'ancienne, et nouvelle police de Geneve.

other request, which was according to God, and to counteract it, Calvin has quoted Justinian. Certainly he is unfortunate in citing against me what he does not believe himself. He does not hold, does not believe, what Justinian has said, *De Sacrosanctis Ecclesiis*, *De Episcopis*, *et Clericis*, and other things in religion, and knows well that the Church was then corrupted. It is a great shame to him; made yet greater by his keeping me five weeks so closely shut up here, without having alleged a single passage against me.

"My Lords, I have also asked an attorney or advocate, as you have granted one to my opponent, who did not need him so much as I, who am a stranger, ignorant of the customs of this country. Nevertheless, you have conceded one to him and not to me, and have dismissed him from prison before taking cognizance of the matter. I desire that my case and my petitions may be referred to the Council of Two Hundred, and if I can appeal to it, I appeal, protesting for all expense, damage, and loss, *et de pœnâ talionis*, both against the first accuser, and against Calvin his master, who has taken the cause upon himself.—Done in your prison of Geneva, the 15th of September 1553."

The Council does not appear to have been debarred from examining the request to transfer the process of Servetus to the Council of the Two Hundred. During the previous year it had been invited to submit all criminal matters to the judgment of that assembly,* but had not given effect to that proposal, which im-

* Register of the 1st of March 1552.

plied a fundamental change in the Edicts, and would have denuded the Little Council of a jurisdiction of which it was jealous. It also passed over the demand which the prisoner made for the assistance of an advocate; but as to the complaints of Servetus regarding the disorder of his wardrobe, it was resolved, "that they should procure for him hose, and the necessary garments, at his own expense." It appears, however, that this decision was not immediately obeyed, either because the Council had neglected specially to charge any one with the duty, or because a culpable neglect had led to its being overlooked by him who should have fulfilled it. At all events Servetus continued some time longer in a state of sad deprivation.

On the grounds laid down in the process itself, the Council decided that they would communicate to the prisoner the different documents, as written both by him and by Calvin, with permission to reply for the last time to the answers of the Reformer. This communication was made to Servetus at the bishops' palace, on the same day (15th September), by the Officers of justice.

Profiting by the permission granted to overthrow the averments of Calvin, the prisoner immediately set himself to the task; but, instead of preparing a consecutive reply, he contented himself with placing on the margin, and between the lines of the memorial subscribed by the ministers, some annotations, by turns explanatory and abusive, in which he corrected the imputations, or hurled invectives against Calvin more cutting still than those of his previous docu-

ment. At the same time, he defied the Reformer by bravadoes: "Do you deny that you are a man-slayer? I will prove it by your deeds. For me, I am firm in so good a cause, and do not fear to die. You howl like a blind man in desert places, because the spirit of vengeance burns in your heart. You lie, you lie, you lie, you ignorant calumniator? Madness is in you when you persecute to the death. I wish that all your magic were still in the belly of your mother, and that I were free to make a catalogue of your errors. You have all roared enough," adds he, in the sequel of his annotations—"you are a great crowd of subscribers, but what passages have you quoted to prove the Son invisible and really distinct? None. Thus my doctrine is not met but by your clamours. You have opposed to it neither arguments nor authorities.*

"M. Servetus has signed alone, it is true, but having Jesus Christ for his most assured protector."

In returning, thus commented on, the document which had been sent to him, Servetus accompanied it with a letter of explanation, addressed to the Council, in which he excuses himself for having "written on the same paper with Calvin," having done it in order that when both sides were placed in visible juxtaposition, men might judge more easily, and without confusion, regarding the questions discussed. He added to his letter two books, perhaps those of Tertullian and Irenæus, to

* Calvin has not given the closing passage in his *Declaration*. It is found in Latin in the bundle of papers relating to the Trial, in the Archives of Geneva.

which he had made references, for the convenience, he said, of "those who shall be empowered to judge and report." He asked, in conclusion, that if Calvin made any new reply, it should be communicated to him. The Council received the packet sent by Servetus in the same session at which they came to a decision regarding the observation of the Edicts in the affair of excommunication. That was on Monday, the 18th of September.

The moment had arrived for terminating the process, both oral and written, now carried on for a month—as the criminal Edicts forbade longer delay. In consequence of this, the magistrates decided that they would again show to Calvin the answers of Servetus, but that they would not communicate to the latter what Calvin might write. The Reformer examined the annotations; but did not think it expedient to make any reply.* The process was duly closed—and the debate between the two theologians was at an end. It only remained to make that use of the written documents which had been resolved on. Ceasing to be a local trial, the cause of Servetus was about to become the affair of the Swiss Reformation.

* *Declaration*, p. 1389.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COUNCIL APPEALS TO THE SWISS CHURCHES—THEIR REPLIES—THE SENTENCE AND DEATH OF SERVETUS.

On Tuesday the 19th of September, the Little Council of Geneva, adopting the proposal made fifteen days before, resolved to write to the Churches of Berne, Zurich, Schaffhausen, and Bâle, to ask their opinion as to the guilt of Servetus, and to forward a letter to them by a messenger of State. Two days were requisite to copy the documents in manuscript exchanged between Calvin and Servetus, and it was on Thursday the 21st of September, that Jaquemoz Jernoz, usually employed by their Lordships to carry despatches into Switzerland, received the circular letters addressed both to the magistrates and the pastors of the four cities.

These letters were accompanied with the documents used in the trial. These were, a copy of the *Christianismi Restitutio*, another of the works of Tertullian, one of those of Irenæus, the articles extracted by Calvin from the writings of Servetus, his reply in self-defence, and finally, the refutation subscribed by all the ministers,

and commented on by the accused. It was from these documents that the Churches were asked to give their opinion as to the guilt of the prisoner. In the two circulars, the Council protested that they did not at all distrust the ministers of Geneva, but only were anxious to obtain additional light, in submitting the book of Servetus and his answers to the scrutiny of other learned men, before adopting any resolution on the subject.*

On the result of this measure the lot of Servetus obviously depended, and he was not at all alarmed. On the contrary, his conduct in the interval proves that he was soothed with the hope of gaining a victory over Calvin, or at least of being dismissed without bodily punishment. This expectation was not absolutely unreasonable. It was known that Calvin was on cold terms with the Church of Bâle†—of indifference with that of Berne‡—it might be hoped that the principles of toleration in matters of heresy, held by Zuingle, would prevail at Zurich; and it is certain that temperate answers would have given the same character to the decree of the Little Council of Geneva.

The hopes of Servetus in this respect went so far that he did not hesitate to constitute himself the accuser of Calvin, and, in his turn, to raise a Criminal

* See these Letters, Appendix E.

† *Calvini Epist. Basil. Ministris*, Jan. 1552. See also his references to the subject in his letter to Sulzer of Bâle, at a previous page.

‡ *Roset* Chroniques, liv. v. ch. 64.

Action against the Reformer, in the bosom of his prison. On the 22d of August he sought only to be banished from Geneva. On the 22d of September he asked the Council to put his adversary upon trial, and, like him, gave in a list of "Articles on which M. Servetus wishes J. Calvin to be interrogated."

He there accuses Calvin of having falsely imputed to him the opinion that the soul is mortal. "If I have said that—not merely said it, but publicly written it—to infect the world, I would condemn myself to death.* Wherefore, my Lords, I demand that my false accuser be punished, *pœnâ talionis*, and that he be detained a prisoner like me, till the cause be decided for his death or mine, or other punishment. And to accomplish that, I now lodge an accusation against him for the said *pœnâ talionis*. And I am content to die if he be not convicted of these things, as well as of others which I shall bring forward." In contradiction to himself, but urged on by hatred against Calvin, Servetus no longer declines the civil jurisdiction in matters of theological opinion, as he had done at a former stage of the trial; he even consents to die for the punishment of his errors, provided that his rival were exposed, in that respect, to the same hazard as himself. Servetus was tossed between his principles and his antipathies — we observe this struggle even in

* It will be seen again that Servetus, in common with his age, held the dogma, that for *opinions* men might be put to death. Farel, in a letter given before, has expressed a sentiment like that of Servetus in the text.—Tr.

the articles annexed to his petition, which constitute the deed of accusation prepared by him against Calvin.

Thus, on the one hand, he reproaches Calvin with having failed in his duty as a minister of the Gospel, in urging the arrestment of Servetus at Vienne, "because the subject of doctrine is not one for a criminal accusation;" but on the other, he ranks "among the great and infallible reasons why Calvin should be condemned," the fact of his wishing to "repress the truth of Jesus Christ, and follow the doctrine of Simon Magus, against all the doctors that ever were in the Church." Thus Calvin, in the process against Servetus, had the disadvantage, by making the doctrines of the latter a ground of charge; and Servetus had the advantage against Calvin, when he set forth the doctrines of the latter as a ground for condemnation. It is thus that passion shows that it can be logical: that of the accused was excited both by the irritation which the solitude of the prison-house fostered, and by the prospect of speedily triumphing over a persecutor, against whom, he believed, a formidable opposition was seriously organized.

The conclusion of his petition clearly shows the idea which he entertained of Calvin's position in Geneva. "Wherefore, like a magician, as he is, he ought not merely to be condemned, but to be exterminated and hunted from your city; and his goods ought to be confiscated to me in return for mine, which he has caused me to lose; which things, my Lords, I request from you." Servetus thought he was on the eve of realizing his

expectations and designs. Although passionate, he was prudent, and able to observe passing events. He knew, while these seemed adverse, to take in sail, and strike his flag—now that they appear favourable, he unmasks his batteries, and discharges all his artillery. To dislodge Calvin from his position, to expel him from Geneva, to satisfy a just vengeance*—these were the objects toward which Servetus rushed, and which he thinks he will now obtain. But this illusion brightened the prisoner's perspective only for a few days; and the absolute silence of the Council regarding his petition very soon enveloped his thoughts again in disquietude and sadness. To the miseries suggested by a very lively imagination were added the endurance of injured health, and a profound despondency soon took possession of that man who, but an hour ago, appeared only to challenge and menace. He then understood that he had not adopted the best method to gain his end, and, completely changing his tone, he addressed a petition to the magistrates, on the 10th of October, as suppliant and melancholy as the former had been arrogant and haughty. It was as follows:—

"Magnificent Lords,—It is full three weeks since I desired and asked an audience, which I have never yet obtained. I implore you, for the love of Jesus Christ, not to withhold from me what you would not refuse to a Turk, asking justice from you. I have important and very pressing things to say to you.

"As to your command to furnish me with something to render me comfortable, nothing has been done, and

* *Une juste Vengeance*, Rilliet.—Tr.

I am more wretched than ever. Besides, the cold torments me severely, in consequence of my colic and rupture, which occasions other miseries, which I am ashamed to describe. It is great cruelty that I am not permitted to speak, merely to relieve my necessities. For the love of God, my Lords, either for pity or for duty, issue the order. Done in your prison of Geneva, the 10th of October, 1553.—M. SERVETUS."

This appeal to the commiseration of the magistrates was more in favour of Servetus than his libel against Calvin. After having heard his petition, the Council resolved that the Lord Syndic, Darlod, and the Secretary of State, Claude Roset, should visit the prisoner, to hear what he had to communicate. It decided further, that the Syndic Darlod should cause to be made for him those articles of dress that were necessary to defend him from the grievances of which he complained. This twofold decision shows that the Council had not, even then, determined beforehand to condemn Servetus, and that a majority had not yet irrevocably taken part against him. The nature of the proposals made by the accused to the commissioners of the magistracy remains unknown; but whatever they were, they must have had very little influence on the mind of the Council which had decided to take the opinions of the Helvetic Churches for its chief guide in the affair. Hence we nowhere find any trace of the result that followed the conference between the prisoner and the deputies of the Council. It is probable that it turned on the points already often discussed by Servetus, and that his endeavour was rather to ascertain

the mind of the magistrates, than to convey any new intelligence.

In the meantime, the messenger of State charged to carry the documents in the trial to the Churches of Switzerland, had successively visited those of Berne, Zurich, Schaffhausen, and Bâle, sojourning in each city long enough to enable the pastors to examine the papers, and embody their sentiments. The journey of Jaquemoz Jernoz lasted nearly a month; for it was only on the 18th of October that he brought back to the Council the answers of the pastors and magistrates of the four cities. Their translation was immediately ordered; and on the second day thereafter, Friday the 20th of October, the magistrates having briefly examined their contents, and heard Servetus himself in his observations, they resolved to adjourn the discussion of the affair, for the sake of still more thorough examination. One sees that their Lordships wished to proceed without urgency or precipitation, and to follow to the very close, the calm and regular procedure from which they never once had swerved.

The Churches were unanimous in the judgment which they pronounced on the theological guilt of Servetus; and in the testimonies of affection and confidence which they gave to Calvin and his colleagues. That of Berne, which was the first consulted, besides blaming the heresies of Servetus, condemned also his pride and his want of modesty. "In effect," it said, "he has reckoned himself free to call in question all the essential points of our religion, wholly to overthrow it by new explanations, and utterly to corrupt it by

reviving the poison of the ancient heretics."—The Reformed accuse Servetus just as Rome accuses the Reformed! As to the measures to be adopted against him, "We pray the Lord," said the pastors of Berne, "that he may give you a spirit of prudence, and counsel, and strength, that you may put your own and other Churches beyond the reach of this pest; and that, in the meantime, you may do nothing which might appear unseemly in a Christian magistrate."

Two years earlier, in 1551, the same Church of Berne, addressing itself to that of Geneva, which had denounced the theological errors of Bolsec, replied: "The more we reflect on it, the more are we convinced that it is not necessary to proceed with too much severity against those who are in error, lest in seeking, at all hazards, to maintain purity of doctrine, we come short of the measure of the Spirit of Christ . . . . . Christ loves the truth—but he also loves souls, even when they go astray . . . . . We approve of your zeal in maintaining the truth—at the same time we conjure you to reflect how much better we may reclaim men's minds by gentleness than by rigour. . . . . To come to the subject of debate between you and Jerome Bolsec, you know well that many respectable minds find, in passages of Scripture, sufficient reason for refusing to assent to the doctrine of divine predestination. Should not that make you tender towards him? . . . . . We pray the Lord to grant you a mind always ready to guide back those who have wandered, and that he would equally bend the

heart of your adversary, that with one consent you may proclaim His glory to the edification of the Church." The guilt of Servetus must needs have been very apparent in the eyes of the Bernese pastors, to occasion a difference so complete between their two replies.*

The Church of Zurich replied at greater length than any of the others, and dwelt chiefly on the theological question, to prove that Servetus was at once a blasphemer and a heretic. More than any of the rest, it insisted also on the necessity of doing Calvin justice against Servetus; and while noticing the manner in which it defended the Reformer from the heretic's attacks, we are reminded that Bullinger had been particularly informed of the position of parties in Geneva, and of the embarrassment which the faction occasioned to the Reformer by means of Servetus. "We hope," said the letter, "that the faith and zeal of Calvin, your pastor and our brother—that his noble devotion to the refugees and pious men will be sufficiently clear not to be eclipsed, either with your Lordships, or upright people, by the worthless charges of that man. Against the latter," added the pastors of Zurich, "we think you ought to manifest much faith and much zeal, especially because our Churches have, abroad, the evil

* The Church of Berne made a distinction between essentials and accessories—between an error which may be held and yet the soul be safe, and an attempt to tear up by the roots the hopes of lost sinners. The former, in the opinion of the Bernese, was the error of Bolsec—the latter the heresy of Servetus, and hence the difference in their opinions as expressed in 1551 and in 1553.—Tr.

reputation of being heretical, and favourable to heresy. But the holy providence of God offers to you at this hour an opportunity of freeing yourselves and us from that injurious suspicion, if you know how to be vigilant and active in preventing the further spreading of that poison. We do not doubt but that your Lordships will act thus."

These words appear to leave little doubt as to the doom which the Church of Zurich wished for Servetus. Its reply was entirely concurred in by the Church of Schaffhausen, which thus expressed itself on the latter point: "We do not question but that you will repress the attempt of Servetus, according to your praiseworthy prudence, in order that his blasphemies may not waste like a gangrene the members of Christ; for, to engage in long reasonings to overthrow his errors, would be to go mad with a fool."

Finally, the Church of Bâle, the last consulted, rejoiced to see Servetus in the hands of the magistrates of Geneva, because "it was persuaded that they would not fail, either in Christian prudence or in the zeal of saints, to remedy an evil which had already led to the ruin of many souls." In their eyes, the theological guilt of Servetus, sufficiently proved by the answer of Zurich, was aggravated by the obstinacy and pride with which he persisted in his errors, in spite of the reflections which his imprisonment and the instructions of the ministers of Geneva ought to have produced. The pastors of Bâle concluded thus: "Finally, we exhort you to employ all proper means to reclaim him, that if possible you may at the same

time counteract the scandals he has occasioned. But if he show himself to be incurably wedded to his perverse opinions, check him according to your office, and the power which you hold from God, so that he may never more be able to trouble the Church of Christ, and that the end may not be worse than the beginning. The Lord grant you, for that purpose, his Spirit of power and of wisdom."

We here perceive that none of the Churches expressly names the nature of the punishment which should be inflicted on Servetus, and we cannot, from their language, affirm or deny that they desired perpetual imprisonment rather than the last punishment—death. Had they explicitly declared their mind, they would have been dictating the sentence of the Council of Geneva, and encroaching, in some degree, upon its jurisdiction. It was, then, with design that they abstained from framing a resolution when they were only asked advice. They counselled, but did not judge.

The Governments of Berne and Zurich did the same. Not having the power to impose on a sovereign State the precise decision which it ought spontaneously to adopt, they expressed themselves in general terms: "You will not," said the Council of Zurich, "allow the wicked and pernicious design of your said prisoner to be accomplished; for it is utterly contrary to the Christian religion, and occasions great scandal and attacks." The Magistrates of Berne, on their part, wrote: "We beseech you—as we do not doubt you are disposed—always to take care that errors and

sects like those mentioned be not disseminated in the Church of Jesus Christ, our only Saviour."*

The mind of the Bernese Council, which is not here plainly expressed, is made clear by a letter from Haller to Bullinger, in which the pastor of Berne declares that the errors of Servetus had excited so much indignation among the magistrates there, that, beyond a question, if the heretic had fallen into the hands of Bernese justice, he would have been condemned to the flames. Haller adds, that the Magistrates of Berne had seriously exhorted the Council of Geneva to remove that scourge, that their own territory might not be infected. It was, in fact, this advice of the Bernese Government, more precisely expressed, no doubt, than in their official letter, which, Calvin asserts in two places,† exercised the greatest influence on the judges of Servetus. What the suggestions of the Clergy would, perhaps, not have obtained from a reluctant majority—although the severity of the Churches must have derived additional weight from the moderation which they had shown regarding Bolsec—political influence accomplished. The Council of Geneva had still too much the habit of yielding to the directions of that of Berne, to refuse a sentence which they prompted, though it was more with a view to their government, and as a matter of policy, than from purely theological motives.

Still the nature of the sentence was uncertain to the

* See Appendix F, for the letters of the four Churches.

† *Epist. Calvini at Farellum*, 26th October 1553, *ad Bern. Ministros*, 29th December 1553.

last moment, and the Council was so much divided at this juncture, that, at a meeting on Monday the 23d of October, after having examined, by a careful perusal, the replies of the four Churches, it could not even then arrive at a definitive decision. What further contributed to delay the sentence was the absence of the Chief Syndic, Perrin, who feigned sickness,* and that of many other councillors, both enemies and friends of Calvin—withheld, no doubt, by the desire to profit, each in his own sense of the term, by a new adjournment. To prevent the renewal of such delays, and to make sure of the completion of this protracted business, the councillors present resolved to proceed once more to examine the prisoner; then to put him, for the sake of precaution, under the special guard of an officer charged to answer for him; and, finally, to assemble all the members of Council, on the faith of their oath, to assist, on Thursday the 26th of October, at the definitive sentence on Servetus.

In virtue of this decision, the Council went to the prison, on the afternoon of the 23d of October; and after having, according to the minutes, "heard the answers formerly given"—that is to say, the reading of the previous examinations—"and the resolution adopted that day"—that is to say, the resolution passed that morning by the Council—"along with the opinions of the ministers of the Churches"—that is to say, the answers of the Swiss pastors—"they have appointed the said Michael Servetus to wait till he learn the good

* *Epist. Calv. ad Farell.*, 26th October 1553.

pleasure of the magistrates"*—that is to say, they granted to the accused a brief delay before signifying the final sentence of their Lordships. He was left under the custody of Jehanton Gerod, a sheriff, and Peter Costel, of the Council of Sixty; probably to prevent the attempts which the jailer Claude de Geneve, who, we have said, was in the confidence of Perrin, and an enemy of the Calvinists, might have planned in his favour.

In the meantime, the adherents of Servetus had not increased; and his trial had not acquired that importance which has since attached to it. Some voices had been raised since his imprisonment, protesting, in the name of liberty, against his trial.† They belonged chiefly to the theological opponents of Calvin, who sought to weaken his influence with the Swiss Churches where they lived,‡ but, as we have seen, without success. In Geneva itself, the question of principle had been openly advocated by an Italian lawyer named Gribaldo, who was an exile on account of his religion, and who wished at once to defend the opinions of Servetus and the cause of toleration; but being disowned by the Italian congregation (where, however, some Antitrinitarians had begun to appear) and by Calvin, he had quitted the city.|| Some other Reformers, though sincerely attached to Calvinistic doc-

* "L'on a remis le dict inquys M. Servetus a ouir la bonne volonté de mess^rs, et a dire droit de jour à jour."

† See the words of Zebedee, pastor of Noyon, in *Hundeshagen*, Conflikte, U. S. W., p. 282.

‡ *Beza*, De Hæreticis Puniendis, pp. 4, 55.

|| *Trechsel*, Die Protest. Antitrinitarier, p. 254.

trine, yet felt a very strong repugnance to the employment of capital punishment in matters of heresy; for it appeared to them at once dangerous and unreasonable to use the same weapons which seemed so odious when employed by Popish hands.*

But whatever were the motives of that opposition to the condemnation of Servetus, the number of opponents was very limited; and though they might wish, they could not expect, that reason would prevail over custom. The resistance might have been stronger had Servetus enjoyed any popularity at Geneva; but it does not appear that his connection with the heads of the Libertine party had acquired for him any great favour among the masses, who were unacquainted with him. He was a tool which the leaders wished to employ for their own ends—not one of the heroes on whose account men rise into enthusiasm. Besides, the party of the Genevese people who were hostile to Calvin, continued unconcerned amid the discussion, which was followed out and concluded in a higher region than theirs. It would have excited their attention, had Servetus attracted their sympathies—it met with nothing but indifference, because it was no business of theirs. Feeling was not excited, except among the combatants themselves, who, on either side, estimated aright the importance of the struggle, and their interest behoved to increase with the uncertainty of the issue.

Calvin, however, did not appear to be disquieted.

* *Declaration*, p. 1321; Beza, *ubi supra*, p. 208.

Being informed as to the tenor of the letters received from Switzerland, he trusted to the effect which they must produce upon the mind of the judges; and he affirms, in the most solemn manner, that he sought to exert no influence upon them to obtain a sentence of death against Servetus. He wrote on the subject to Bullinger, on the 25th of October: "It is not known what shall happen to this person. I conjecture, however, that his sentence will be pronounced in the Council to-morrow, and that the next day he will be led to punishment." The conjectures of the Reformer were right.

The sitting of the 26th of October closed with a decree condemning Servetus to death—adopted after a stormy discussion. The Council, solemnly convened, was nearly full. Amied Perrin presided, and he made a last but useless effort in favour of his protegé. He at first insisted that he should be declared innocent, and discharged as acquitted. This absolution was equivalent to the exile of Calvin, and the Chief Syndic would have been too happy indirectly to provoke to that result, which would have secured a permanent triumph for himself and his party in Geneva, when delivered from the Reformer. The prospect of this must have excited his eloquence; but nevertheless he was baffled. Then, falling back on another alternative, he proposed that the case should be transferred to the Council of Two Hundred, as Servetus had already demanded. Perrin knew that before that assembly, in general hostile to Calvin, he would more easily obtain what the Little Council refused. But this proposal

was rejected like the other, from which it did not essentially differ.

The Government of Geneva was then composed of men belonging to the two extreme parties, and of magistrates who occupied an intermediate position. Perrin had in it adherents ever ready to vote with him; Calvin counted upon friends disposed to support him by their influence—consequently it was the neutral councillors that caused the balance to incline to the one side or the other. Without being as openly hostile to the Reformer as the Perrinists, they were much less attached to him than their other colleagues were; and they made that plain a month thereafter, in the proposal regarding the right of excommunication. But there is reason to believe that, when sentence was pronounced against Servetus, where the keenest adversaries of the Reformer were not present, except Perrin, whilst not a Calvinist councillor was absent,* these masters of the majority were less occupied about what might promote or thwart the wishes of Calvin, than with what menaced the vital interests of the Reformed cause. They had not so eagerly espoused the cause of the Captain-General as to forget that of the Republic. The unanimity of the Swiss Churches in condemning Servetus—his attacks against doctrines

* There were present at the meeting of the 26th of October, Perrin, De Chapeaurouge, Darlod, Desfosses, Philippin, Chamois, Chaultems, Malagnyod, Beney, Rigot, Delarche, C. Vandel, Sept.; Botellier, Corna, Bonna, Aubert, Jessé, Du Pan, and Lambert. The last seven were decided Calvinists; the minority was probably composed of Perrin, Philippin, Malagnyod, C. Vandel, Sept. There were absent Chicand, Des Arts, Du Mollard, P. Vandel, Favre.

till then held sacred in every communion, among others, against the Trinity and the baptism of infants —his condemnation at Vienne as an impious blasphemer—the promises of justice given to the magistrates of that city—the exhortations to severity received from those of Zurich and Berne—the troubles which the partisans of novel opinions had already produced in the Churches of the Reformation—all these contributed to separate the guilt of Servetus from his rivalry with Calvin in the minds of the judges, and to make them forget the theologian to think only of the criminal.*

In fact, the heresy of Servetus had assumed, in the eyes of the Council of Geneva, the twofold character of blasphemy and sedition. It was at once the outraged honour of God and the peace of society that they believed themselves to be defending, while they punished him. The intimate union that existed in the State between religion and politics, led men to regard in the same light errors which assailed the former, and deeds which violated the principles of the latter. In both, men saw a revolt against the established constitution, and by consequence a crime. The purely theological quarrel disappeared before this motive for condemning; and the judicial sentence, in the list of charges brought against Servetus, does not mention at all

* It will be seen from the text how little influence Calvin exerted in the final deed regarding Servetus. The Reformer, according to Rilliet, was not merely not the instigator—he was not even consulted —he was overlooked; and Rillet, who has brought this fact to light, has examined all the existent documents with the dispassionate accuracy of a judge.—TR.

either the attacks against Calvin or those against the ministers of Geneva. The question did not relate to controversies originating in the schools—it referred to the attack made "on the true foundations of the Christian religion." The magistracy being once thoroughly convinced, by the unprejudiced advice of the Helvetic Churches, that the opinions of Servetus implied something more than a mere dissent from Calvin, and that they were most certainly pernicious to religion, the principles of public order, as then understood, did not permit them longer to hesitate as to whether or not they should see in them the crime of treason against society.

Besides, the Council was urged towards that conviction by considerations of expediency. It was important not to allow a Reformed Church to be exposed to the suspicion of conniving at opinions reckoned blasphemous by the whole of Christendom. It concerned them as much, as magistrates, not to favour the propagation of doctrines reputed seditious, and troublesome to the peace of the people. The Reformed, after having profited by the benefits of liberty, to secure for themselves new beliefs and new institutions, had come, in their turn, to dread the dissolving influence of that very freedom, as soon as their new system was matured.

As to the right to inflict punishment for the excess of religious opinion, and to chastise impiety, that was never a question in the mind of the magistrate. In condemning Servetus and his doctrines, the Council of Geneva did not think that it was doing aught more strange than in declaring Berthelier capable of receiving

the communion.* In principle, if not in fact, both decisions ought to be distinctly placed in the same rank; and they are both sufficiently explained by the confusion which existed in the constitution of the Republic, between the temporal and ecclesiastical domains. Besides, the Codes of Theodosius and Justinian, appealed to by the Attorney-General, the Imperial Constitutions which had helped to form the usages in criminal jurisprudence,† and the claims to *all power* on the part of the body-politic, would have helped to remove scruples regarding the competency of the civil magistrate, had any existed. These scruples did not arise in any country, except in some rare exceptions, till long after this epoch; and Montesquieu, in some degree justifies the Council of Geneva, when he writes, two ages thereafter: "I have not said that it is not necessary to punish heresy; I have only said that it is necessary to be very circumspect in punishing it." ‡ We have seen Servetus himself acknowledging that principles subversive of religion should necessitate the death of their author. In the eyes of Genevese justice, his own opinions were of that nature. Hence he had in some degree, by anticipation subscribed his own condemnation.

One might, without doubt, deny that a just esti-

* This sentence shows that Erastianism is intimately allied to persecution; nay, grant that the former may be tolerated in the Church, and persecution is its native result.—Tr.

† These Codes and Constitutions pronounced the pain of death against heresy. See *Richter*—Lehrbuch des Kirchenrechts, 1842, § 205.

‡ *Esprit des Lois*, livre xii. chap. 5.

mate of his position had been formed; but from the moment that a jury so competent as the Churches and Governments of Switzerland had pronounced Servetus a blasphemer, and seditious, there was nothing to object, according to the opinions of the age, to the application of capital punishment.* This was not the first time that the Genevese judges had pronounced it in similar cases—I mean similar in their eyes. In 1547, James Gruet, a citizen, had been beheaded as one guilty of an attempt against society, on account of his impious doctrines. Hence, as soon as Servetus was regarded by a majority of the Council as a sworn enemy of religion, and, consequently, of the public peace, it was of no importance as to his condemnation or acquittal, to know whether Calvin would be more or less satisfied with the one decision or the other. Local considerations disappeared before the general interest; or if they had any influence, it was to make the Council comprehend that after having punished the heretic, they would be placed in better circumstances for resisting the ecclesiastical pretensions of the Reformer.†

Hence the fruitless effort of Perrin, dictated by passion rather than toleration—hence the final deci

* What Rousseau said in 1763 applies equally to the year 1553: "As there are not at Geneva penal laws, properly so called, the magistrate punishes crimes arbitrarily."—*Lettres ecrites de la Montagne.* Let., v., Note i.

† In this point of view, the execution of Servetus, far from being the result of Calvin's influence, was, in fact, a step taken to help forward the setting up of that Erastianism against which he contended till his dying day.—Tr.

sion of the Council, inscribed in these words in the Registers:—

"Veu le sommaire du procès de Michiel Servet, prisonnier, le rapport de ceux esquelz on a consultez, et considéré ses grands erreurs et blasfemes—est esté arresté, Il soyt condamné à estre mené en Champel, et là bruslez tout vifz, et soit éxéquuté à demain et ses livres bruslés." *

Viewed by our consciences, which the very faults of the past have enlightened, this sentence is odious—*it was just, according to law.* In returning it, the judges believed they were fulfilling a duty; so that it is not from them,† it is from their age that we must demand an account of that lamentable error. We shall be excused if we do not employ words of condemnation here, which, in our day, would be only to declaim. These aberrations of our race inspire us, if we may say it, rather with humiliation on its account than with pride on our own; and as to those whose position rendered them the instruments of such cruel prejudices, we must, before condemning them, be sure that in their place we would not have acted as they did. Let us deplore their sentence without attacking their intentions; for we could not do so except by profit-

* "Having examined the abstract of the trial of M. Servetus, prisoner, the report of those whom we have consulted, and considered his grand errors and blasphemies, it is thus decreed: Let him be condemned to be led to Champel, and there burned alive; and let him be executed to-morrow, and his books consumed."—Tr.

† We may add, It is not from Calvin.—Tr.

ing by a privilege which was refused to them—the benefit of *time*.

Scarcely had the sentence been passed when Calvin was informed of it, and in his turn he announced it to Farel, to whom he had written some days before, beseeching him to come to Geneva, when the sentence of Servetus was pronounced. As Farel had not arrived, Calvin wrote to him again, and the pastor of Neufchatel crossed the letter of Calvin by the way. In it the Genevese Reformer told his brother, that his colleagues and himself had put forth all their efforts to change the nature of the punishment of Servetus, and substitute the sword for the fire. The motive of this attempt was, no doubt, to avoid the use of those means which the Roman Inquisition employed against heretics and Protestants, and not to recur to instruments of punishment already become odious. Calvin wished to leave to Romanists the monopoly of the *auto-da-fe*, but the magistrates did not enter into his views. The canon law condemned to the flames persons convicted of heresy; * without disturbing themselves as to the origin of the punishment, the Little Council conformed to the practice; and the judicial usage, already followed by the judges of Vienne, triumphed over the request of Calvin. It is to him, notwithstanding, that men have always imputed the guilt of that funeral pile, which he wished had never been reared! †

* Compare *Bœhmer*, Instit. Juris Canon. 1747, lib. v., tit. 7, § 10.

† It is satisfactory to find Calvin thus freed from the charges so often brought by ignorance against him. It is manifest to every impartial inquirer, that the magistrates latterly conducted the whole affair; and, moreover, that while the laws of Geneva continued

In the meantime, Servetus awaited in his prison the result of the meeting where his doom was to be decided, for he could not be ignorant that the close of the drama was at hand. The audience which he had had with his judges two days before—the constant and unusual presence of a magistrate of police—the information of his friends—all must have taught him that the issue was about to be announced.

It appeared, however, that, swayed as he always was by the excitableness of his imagination, his alarms had been dissipated, and he was little afraid of the result of his trial. The hope of acquittal, or of a slight punishment, had not abandoned him, and it seemed to him as if the power of his protectors could not be baffled at the close. The announcement of his condemnation to death, which was made to him on the morning of the same day on which he was executed, was to him a thunder-peal which overwhelmed his soul, and terrified him the more that it was utterly unexpected.

Before this irrevocable and inevitable sentence all his courage disappeared—all his confidence vanished—he was like one deranged. "When the message of death was brought to him," says Calvin, "he was at intervals like one mad—then he uttered groans which resounded through his chamber—anon, he began to howl like one out of his senses. In brief, he had all the appearance of a demoniac. At last his outcry was so great that he, without intermission,

what they were, they could not do otherwise than they did, without outraging the very enactments of which they were the executive.—Tr.

exclaimed in Spanish, striking his breast, 'Mercy! mercy!'" The poor unhappy man, so terribly deluded, sought refuge in the first asylum open to the undeceived, namely, despair. By degrees, however, he recovered his spirits, and regained some degree of composure; but he had lost his passion and his pride.

Farel having arrived at Geneva on the previous evening, he was with Servetus when he learned the fatal sentence.* After the first explosion, the criminal, addressing himself to the venerable old man, who tried to convince him of his guilty error, asked him to quote a single place of Scripture where Christ was called *Son of God* before he was clothed with humanity. Farel pointed out the passages suited to satisfy him, but in vain. Servetus did not abandon his system; and even when imploring pardon, and praying to God and Jesus Christ, whom he called his Saviour, he would not consent that Christ was the Son of God, otherwise than by his humanity. In the eyes of Farel, of Bullinger, of Haller, of Melancthon, of Calvin, of almost all the Reformers, the dissemination of such an idea was a crime. The Council of Geneva appeared to have judged like them.

In the meantime, before the sentence recorded by it had been solemnly pronounced, Farel was anxious that an interview should take place between Calvin

* Farel, in a letter preserved by *Hottinger* (Helv. Kirchengeschichte iii. Th. S. 803–805), gives an account of the last moments of Servetus. We have collected from it the greater part of the subsequent details.

and Servetus. The latter showed himself quite disposed to it; and Calvin requested, through one of his colleagues, the Council's warrant to that effect. It was granted without delay, and the Councillors Corna and Bonna were appointed to accompany him to the condemned. Being asked by one of them what he had to say to Calvin, Servetus answered, that he wished to ask his pardon. To this the Reformer replied: "I protest that I have never pursued against you any private quarrel. You must remember that it is now more than sixteen years since, at Paris, I spared no pains to gain you to our Lord, and if you had yielded to reason, I would have endeavoured to reconcile to you all the good servants of God. You then shunned the light, and I did not cease, notwithstanding, to exhort you by letters; but all has been in vain—you have cast against me I know not how much fury rather than anger. But as to the rest, I pass by what concerns myself. Think rather of crying for mercy to God whom you have blasphemed, in wishing to efface the three persons who are in his essence; ask pardon of the Son of God, whom you have degraded, and, as it were, denied for your Saviour." This address of Calvin had no greater success than the exhortations of Farel, and the Reformer withdrew, as St Paul (said he) orders us to withdraw from a heretic.* Taught by adversity, Servetus now appeared as mild and humble towards his adversary as he had hitherto been arrogant and bold; but though he controlled his feelings, he did not sacrifice his convictions.

* *Declaration*, p. 1317.

The moment approached when he must appear before the tribunal, assembled, according to custom, at the gates of the Town House, from the balcony of which a Syndic read to criminals the fatal sentence. It was on the 27th October 1553, towards eleven o'clock before noon, that the condemned saw the Lord Lieutenant enter the prison in quest of him, accompanied by the Secretary of Justice. The prisoner was addressed in the customary words: "Come with me, to hear the good pleasure of my Lords." Servetus obeying, follows the magistrates. On leaving the bishops' palace, he comes accompanied by Farel, to the feet of the judges, to hear the Lord Syndic Darlod pronounce the sentence of condemnation..

The considerations and motives of this decree imply, we must repeat, that in the eyes of the Council of Geneva the heresy of Servetus was less a crime in itself than by its consequences; and that they wished to punish him, not for a mere error in opinion, but to put Christendom beyond the risk of a harvest of troubles, of which they declared him the obstinate "sower." The simple *belief* of a heretic sufficed to cause him to be cast into the flames, by the tribunals charged to execute the sentences of the Roman Inquisition—it was against *the propagation of heresy* that Geneva prepared its piles. We do not here seek to excuse—we only establish a difference. As to what remains, here are the words of the sentence, such as Servetus, downcast, defeated, and horror-struck, heard it proceed from the lips of the magistrate—we have not courage to analyze its contents, when we think of the

anguish which the reading of it must have occasioned to the unhappy man:—

"The Process prepared and conducted before us, most redoubtable Lord Syndics, judges in causes criminal in this city, at the suit and instance of our Lord Lieutenant of this said city, in said causes pursuer;

"Against Michael Servetus of Villeneuve, in the kingdom of Arragon, in Spain.

"The which has, in the first place, been accused of having, about twenty-three or twenty-four years ago, caused to be printed at Haguenau, in Germany, a book against the holy and undivided Trinity, containing many great blasphemies against it, highly scandalous to the Churches of said Germany—which book he spontaneously confessed to have caused to be printed, notwithstanding of remonstrances and corrections of his false opinions made to him by the learned evangelical doctors of said Germany.

"*Item*—and which book has been by the doctors of those Churches of Germany refuted as full of heresy, and the said Servetus obliged to flee from said Germany because of said book:

"*Item*—and notwithstanding of that, the said Servetus has persevered in his false errors, infecting with them as many as he could:

"*Item*—and not content with that, for the better spreading and diffusing of his said poison and heresy, in a little time from that, he caused clandestinely to be printed another book at Vienne in Dauphiné, full of said heresies, horrible, and execrable blasphemies

against the Holy Trinity, against the Son of God, against the baptism of little infants, and many other holy passages and principles of the Christian religion.

"*Item*—he has spontaneously confessed that in this book he calls those who believe in the Trinity, Tritheists * and Atheists:

"*Item*—and that he calls the Trinity a devil, and a monster with three heads:

"*Item*—and contrary to the true foundation of the Christian religion, and detestably blaspheming against the Son of God, he has said that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God from all eternity, but only from his incarnation:

"*Item*—and contrary to what Scripture says, that Jesus Christ was the Son of David according to the flesh—he unhappily denies it, saying that he has been created of the substance of God the Father, having received three elements from him, and only one from the Virgin. In which he wickedly tries to abolish the true and entire humanity of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the supreme consolation of the poor human race:

"*Item*—and that the baptism of little infants is only an invention of the devil and of witchcraft:

"*Item*—and many other points and articles, and execrable blasphemies with which the said book is all stuffed, hugely scandalous, and against the honour and majesty of God, of the Son of God, and of the Holy Spirit, which is a cruel and horrible murder, perdition, and ruin of many poor souls, being betrayed

* Trinitaires.—Tr.

by the above mentioned perfidious and detestable doctrine—a thing shocking to be related:

"*Item*—and which Servetus, full of malice, has entitled his book, thus directed against God, and the holy evangelical doctrine, *Christianismi Restitutio*—that is, the Restoration of Christianity; and that for the better seducing and deceiving the poor ignorants, and for more easily infecting with his unhappy and wretched poison the readers of his said book, under the shade of sound doctrine:

"*Item*—and, besides the book above mentioned, assailing our faith also by letters, and taking pains to infect it with his poison, he has voluntarily confessed and acknowledged to have written letters to one of the ministers of this city, in which, among other horrible and enormous blasphemies against our holy evangelical religion, he says our Gospel is without faith, and without God, and that for a god we have a Cerberus with three heads:

"*Item*—and yet more, he has voluntarily confessed that at the above named place of Vienne, he was imprisoned on account of that wicked and abominable book and opinions; which prison he treacherously broke, and escaped:

"*Item*—and the said Servetus has not only directed his doctrine against the true Christian religion, but like an arrogant introducer of heresies, against the Papistry and others, so that at Vienne he was even burnt in effigy, with five bales of his said books:

"*Item*—and notwithstanding of all that, being here detained in the prison of this city, he has not ceased

maliciously to persist in his said vile and detestable errors, endeavouring to maintain them with injuries and calumnies against all true Christians, and faithful holders of the pure, immaculate Christian religion, calling them Tritheists, Atheists, Sorcerers, in spite of the remonstrances long ago made to him in Germany, as has been said, and in contempt of reproofs, imprisonments, and corrections given to him elsewhere, as well as here; as is more largely and at length set forth in his trial:

"And we, the Syndics, Judges in causes criminal of this city, having considered the Process prepared and conducted before us, at the instance of our Lieutenant, pursuer in said causes, against thee, M. Servetus of Villeneuve, in the kingdom of Arragon in Spain, by which, and thy voluntary confessions put into our hands, and many times repeated, and thy books produced before us, it is plain and apparent to us that thou, Servetus, hast for a long time put forth false and clearly heretical doctrine; and here, by putting aside all remonstrances and corrections, with a malicious and perverse obstinacy, thou hast sown and promulgated it even to the publishing of printed books against God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—in brief, against the true principles of the Christian religion; by that, thou hast endeavoured to cause schism and trouble in the Church of God by which men's souls might be ruined and destroyed, —a thing horrible and shocking, scandalous and infectious, and hast had no shame nor horror boldly to assail the Divine Majesty and the Holy Trinity, and

hast also taken pains and been obstinately employed in infesting the world with thy heresies and offensive heretical poison—cause and crime of grievous and detestable heresy, and meriting severe bodily chastisement. For these and other just reasons us hereto moving, desiring to purge the Church of God of such infection, and to cut off from it such a corrupt member—having well consulted with our fellow-citizens,* and having invoked the name of God to guide to right judgment, sitting on the tribunal in the place of our ancestors—having God, and his Holy Scriptures before our eyes, saying in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by this our definitive sentence, which we give here in writing, we condemn thee, M. Servetus, to be bound, and led to the place of Champel, there to be fastened to a stake, and burned alive, with thy book, as well written by thy hand as printed, even till thy body be reduced to ashes, and thus wilt thou finish thy days, to furnish an example to others who might wish to commit the like.

"And by you, our Lieutenant, we command our present sentence to be put in execution."†

The last words had scarcely fallen on the ears of Servetus, when, struck with horror at the prospect of that frightful punishment, he exclaimed that he had

* That is to say, with the Little Council, the Syndics being reckoned sole judges in criminal cases, as already noticed.

† This whole Sentence is expressed according to the formula commonly employed in pronouncing judgment.

erred through ignorance, that he had always sought to follow Scripture, and that he implored them to commute his punishment into one less rigorous. Farel then said to him that, to obtain mercy, he must confess his fault, and testify his horror at it; but Servetus refused that confession, repeating that he had not merited death, and that he prayed God to pardon his accusers.

Five years after that, another theologian, accused of the same errors as Servetus, and threatened with the same doom by the magistrates, showed that he was less obstinate or less convinced. This was the Italian, Valentin Gentili, who, after having attacked the doctrine of the Trinity, abandoned his opinion, and was acquitted on his making a solemn confession of his faults, asking pardon from the judges, with a torch in his hand, barefooted, and on his knees, and burning with his own hand the book in which he had taught his doctrine. Servetus could have escaped from the affair at the same price, but he did not wish to profit by the benefits of a recantation, and preferred his convictions to his life. In this perseverance, Farel saw only a guilty obstinacy, and he was so incensed that he threatened Servetus not to follow him to the funeral pile, if he persisted in maintaining his innocence. Silence was the only reply of the condemned man, and the mournful procession began to move forward.

Passing under the gate of the castle (an ancient arcade of the Bourg-de-Four), it crossed the place of the Bourg-de-Four, and ascending the street of St Anthony (the Braziers), it issued from the town by the

gate of the same name. Then, moving southward, it turned toward the place of punishment, leaving on the left the spot where, twenty years before, there stood the celebrated Faubourg and Church of St Victor, razed in 1534, for the defence of Geneva. Here was the glorious remembrance of sacrifices made for political freedom, and only a few paces farther were the mournful traces of another sacrifice consummated against religious liberty! The Lord Lieutenant, and the herald on horseback, both arrayed in the insignia of their office, marched before the archers who surrounded Farel and Servetus. The crowd, less numerous than that which commonly assists at such sights, swelled the escort.

During the short journey that separated the place of the sentence from that of the punishment, Farel endeavoured to obtain from the condemned a confession of his crime; while he persisted in asking that his faults should be pardoned, but he neither uttered a disavowal of his beliefs, nor did he try further to defend them. Calvin, who was incensed and offended at the thought that "the disciples of Servetus, or pragmatical men like him, should wish, out of his furious obstinacy, to evoke the constancy of a martyr," cannot resist reproaching him for "having made no confession, either on the one side or the other, more than a block of wood, although he had permission to speak as he chose."* These words are unjust. That was not the moment for Servetus either to abandon or maintain opinions which could not, at that last hour,

* *Declaration*, p. 1365.

exclusively engross his soul. The sight of the pile which he was to mount inspired him with more serious desires. Why marvel, if in his mind polemics gave place to eternity? Let us grant to Calvin, since he holds it, that Servetus did not die as a martyr—it will not follow, as he wishes, that he died as an impious man.

At a little distance from the walls of Geneva, towards the south, there rises a little hill with graceful outlines, from the summit of which the view extends over one of the most lovely landscapes of that country. In the distance are the clear waters and the luxuriant banks of the Lake of Geneva; the immense amphitheatre of the Jura, which terminates the horizon to the west and the north; and the undulating ridges of the mountains which shut up the valley of the Leman towards the south-west. All around, at the base of the hills, are smiling fields; at some paces distant, the ancient Geneva, whose edifices, closely crowded on each other, resemble a dark bee-hive; and in front of the spectator turned towards the west, the hills rise in terraces above La Cluse, cut like a breach in the rampart of the Jura; then nearer still, and in front of rugged slopes, between which the Arve and the Rhone imprison their course, without mingling their waters, is the verdant down of Plain Palais, the *Campus Martius* of Geneva, traditionally consecrated to civic festivals and warlike pomps. One side alone is stern, which one leaves behind him to survey, in a single glance, the picture which we have sketched—it is the barren and the rocky Salève,

whose jagged sides sadden the view as much by their wild monotony, as the rest of the panorama delights by an innumerable variety of prospects. The little eminence from whose height one can contemplate these contrasts, is Champel—on its summit was prepared the funeral pile of Servetus. *

If the gaze of that unhappy man could still rest on the beauties of nature, he must have experienced a new pang in contemplating from the place of his execution, amid the varied tints of autumn, that delicious spectacle which produced in the soul the sweetest emotions; or rather, in marching towards the scene of his death, his eyes, if they quitted the earth, would naturally be arrested by the gloomy escarpments of the mountain which rose in front of him, like a curbing and invincible barrier. The indomitable rather than the picturesque in the harmonies of creation ought to respond to the impressions of that unhappy man.

In the meantime, the procession and the people who accompany it, have reached the heights of Champel. The preparations for the execution are finished—and the executioner only waits for his victim. Before surrendering him, Farel invites the heretic to solicit the prayers of the spectators who surround him, and to unite his own supplications to theirs. Servetus obeys the request, and then is

* There was there in ancient times a chapel dedicated to St Paul, whence the names of *Tattes de St Paul*, given, according to La Corbiere, to the level of Champel, on which, and not at the spot called *Champ du Bourreau*, should be placed the theatre of executions. This latter place was the cemetery of the executed.

silent; but pious invocations continue to ascend to Heaven, while the unhappy man for whom these prayers arose in silence mounts the funeral pile. Amid the faggots which are to consume him, there is placed a stake, to which the executioner fastens him by chains of iron; his book, the cause and companion of his punishment, is bound by his side; upon his head there is placed a crown of leaves, covered with sulphur. Instantly the murderous torch gleams in his eyes, and the sight of the flame extorts from him a cry of terror which irresistibly startled the spectators of that mournful scene.*

The flames speedily reach him—they devour him —and before an hour has fled, there remains nothing of Servetus on the earth but some scattered ashes —a name henceforth celebrated—and a mournful remembrance.

The tardy scandal which this execution has occasioned is a tribute offered to the spirit of the Reformation; for it is, perhaps, less the *rigour* of the judges than their inconsistency which has given such notoriety to the death of Servetus. Everywhere else but in a Reformed city he might have perished without his memory recalling anything but a funeral pile and a victim. At Geneva, he could not lose his life without becoming the representative of a cause, and the martyr of a principle.

* We regard as apocryphal the details which are sometimes given regarding the last moments of Servetus, and have not narrated them.

However sincere might be the motives of those who desired, commanded, and sanctioned his condemnation, freedom of opinion and inviolability of thought have not been the less outrageously attacked in his person: they have been avenged in the popularity of his name, and the condemnation of his punishment. The Reformation had too soon forgotten that its existence in the Christian world implied the one and the other of these conditions, as necessary to the development of intelligence and of faith.

The Reformed Church did not understand that in giving to man truth for *an end*, God gave him free inquiry for *the means*. She had turned her desires and endeavours only to the first, and when she believed that she had secured it, she judged the second thenceforward superfluous. After having employed liberty not to destroy, but to displace authority in matters of faith, she wished, in her turn, to forbid to others the use of that instrument of which she saw only the danger. Luther, in order to avert the Roman thunders from his head, wrote at the beginning of his struggle, "To burn heretics is contrary to the will of the Holy Spirit."* Thirty-five years thereafter Calvin delivered up Servetus to secular justice. Melancthon congratulated him for it, and publicly sustained the thesis "that the magistrates of Geneva did well to burn the heretic."†

* Conclusio LXXX. in Resol. De Indulgentiis, 1518. This thesis is among those which the Sorbonne condemned in 1521.

† In the *Corpus Reform.* published by Bretschneider, tome viii. pp. 362, 520. See also the letter of Melancthon to Bullinger, p. 523.

In seeking to repress the manifestation of opinions opposed to its own, the Reformation acted in good faith; for it had experience of the dangers which followed the steps of religious emancipation, and felt itself still sore from the blows inflicted in its own camp by the conflict of opinions. The errors of the Reformation lay in not trusting for protection to the same principles which had called it into existence, and in yielding to the irresistible temptation to repress by force (of which the political authorities offered the assistance, while they concealed its odiousness), what should have been combated only by persuasion. The Word had produced the Reformation; but to defend itself, it preferred the scaffold to the Word. The execution of Servetus was at once the fruit and the remedy of this fatal inconsistency. Repression had, in effect, nothing but a funeral pile for its logic and for its practical result; but the flames of that pile threw light on the iniquity of repression better than the most able arguments. They have perhaps enlightened men's minds as much as all the Popish *autos-da-fe;* for one signal contradiction shocks us more than the results of a consistent system.

At the same time, we should by no means neglect to notice, without prejudice to the partisans of heterodox opinions, who plead a cause rather than defend a principle, that the public conscience offered no protest. The life of one man in those days of contest and of danger did not appear to any one a monstrous sacrifice; it was a stake that lost its prize, because every

one was called very frequently to risk it. The manners of that epoch, wholly characterized by fierce rudeness or licentious frivolity, left no room in that contrast for emotions of pity. The punishment of a heretic satisfied the convictions of the one, and did not even ruffle the insensibility of the other: the rights of humanity and of thought were stifled between indifference and austerity.

Time has done its work, and that repression of religious belief which, perhaps, would not have influenced the mind had it remained within the limits of a moderate punishment, has outraged conscience and the heart by passing into a Church the daughter of independence and of a free faith, to erect scaffolds even there. Men have recoiled at this excess of error, and little by little have recoiled from the error itself: it is no longer the mere impunity of manifestations of thought which is guaranteed—it is the free utterance of convictions that has taken its place among our inalienable privileges—we must add, of our most sacred duties. Why is man so constituted that we must repeat, in seeing the price at which the reign of social truth is established, what Augustus said regarding the consolidation of his empire—

"Why always blood, and always punishments?"

—But we forget that our duty of historian should have closed with the life of Servetus. If we have trespassed, it is because it was necessary plainly to

indicate to what opinion the narrative of his trial conducts us—and to show that the interest which is associated with the name of Servetus may have another origin than hostility to the Reformation, or hatred to Calvin.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

A—Page 63.

The following are the remarks by Rilliet on the labours of his predecessors in treating of Servetus. They are omitted in the text, as not essential to the continuity of the narrative, but placed here, as indicating the importance of Rilliet's labours :—

"The really original historians, whose narratives are reproduced like traditions, and without corrections, are the minister De la Roche and Professor Mosheim. The former gave in two periodical collections, the one English, and the other French,* according to extracts which he himself had made from the original papers of the trial, an interesting, but incomplete, account of the proceedings. Some portions of these extracts were also published along with the petitions of Servetus, and the sentence of condemnation. In 1748, J. L. de Mosheim published, in German, a very prolix biography of M. Servetus,† in which

* Memoirs of Literature, &c., vol. i., p. 349 (London: 1712, folio); and Bibliotheque Anglaise, tome ii., art. 7 (Amst., 1717, 12mo).

† Anderweitiger Versuch einer Vollstandigen, und unpartheyischen Ketzergeschichte (Helmstadt, 1748, 4to), having for its second title, Geschichte des beruhmten Spanishen Arztes Michaels Serveto. In 1750, Mosheim completed this work by his Neue Nachrichten von dem beruhmten Spanischen Arzte M. Serveto der zu Geneve ist verbrannt worden.

according to another extract from the same documents, which had been transmitted to him, he presented a detailed, but equally imperfect, account of the judicial prosecution directed against his hero. From that time no one had had recourse to the documents which the archives of Geneva contain, and it had even been reported, as it is still generally believed, that the papers of the process against him were no longer in existence. In 1839, a Bernese pastor, M. Trechsel, who has given in German a good history of that heretic,* affirmed, on the testimony of MM. M'Crie and Henry, the most recent biographers of Calvin,† that 'the original documents in that remarkable procedure had disappeared from the archives of Geneva, according to a letter of the Syndic Calandrini, addressed to Jacob Vernet, and transcribed by Galiffe.' To compensate for this presumed disappearance, M. Trechsel has published a sufficiently accurate copy of the authentic proceedings made in the second half of the last century, and deposited in the Library at Berne. Finally, in 1842, the original documents of the trial contained in the archives were discovered by M. de Valayre, who has availed himself of them, without indicating their existence, for the composition of an historical fragment upon Servetus, inserted in his *Legendes et Chroniques Suisses*.‡ Unfortunately, the documents which were at his disposal have not been, in our opinion, either completely or exactly consulted by him.

"Of these different writers, M. Trechsel is the one who

* Die Protestantischen Antitrinitarier vor Faustus Socin. Erstes Buch: Michael Servet, und Seine Vorgänger. Heidelberg, 1839, 8vo.

† It is not known to which of the M'Cries Rilliet here refers; but it is obvious he was under the erroneous impression that one of them had actually written a Life of Calvin. The impression arose, either from the fact that Dr M'Crie, at the period of his lamented death, was known to be engaged on that work, or that Mr John M'Crie, during a long residence in Geneva, was much employed in making collections for a Life of Calvin, which he was not, in providence, permitted to write.—Tr.

‡ Paris, 1842, p. 283-357.

appears to have approached the nearest to the truth; but he is deficient also in the exact knowledge of the forms of ancient Genevese justice, and has not made the connection of the process against Servetus with contemporary events sufficiently prominent. Besides, like the rest, he had not the knowledge of the Registers of the Little Council, and other documents which throw light on the trial, nor even of the manuscript extracts made by Gautier, while even they do not include all the details contained in the authentic digest. We have examined the latter with care, and copied entire the deliberations and decisions which relate to the affair of Servetus. We also took a complete copy of those parts of the proceeding which are collected in a separate volume of more than two hundred folio pages, under the title: *Proces de Michel Servetus*, 1553. We find there the questions put to Servetus —the petitions of the party complaining, and those of the accused—the documents of the written discussion—various pieces annexed—the correspondence with the Swiss Churches and Governments, and the sentence of condemnation.

"It is an accurate analysis of these different documents that forms the basis of our present work. In addition, we have made use of historical details contained in contemporary letters, MS. and printed; of the information furnished by the Vindication which Calvin himself published in 1554;* and of some facts concerning the sojourn and the punishment of Servetus, contained in a narrative which an adversary to Calvin published a short time after the heretic's death.†

* *Declaration pour maintenir la vraye foy que tiennent tous Chrestiens de la Trinité des personnes en un seul Dieu, Contre less erreurs detestables de Michel Servet, Espagnol, Ou il est aussi monstré qu'il est licite de punir les heretiques et qu'a bon droict ce meschant a esté executé par justice en la ville de Geneve.*—See Calvin's *Opuscula.*

† *Historia de Morte Serveti.* This account, of some pages, appears to

"In bringing together the stores furnished by those different sources of information which contemporary narratives afford, regarding the state of the Republic at the time of the affair of Servetus, we have been able to present it, we hope, under an aspect as true as the conscientious employment of historical documents would permit. Our work had not for its object, and will not have for its result, the furnishing of new weapons of defence, either to the enemies or the friends of Calvin, whose name is now found inseparably connected with that of Servetus. Historical truth is in general but little connected with absolute judgments, and it is that truth alone which we have sought, shunning, as much as possible, to mix up with the estimate of past times the ideas, the opinions, and the lights of our own. Besides, to be fully understood, the sojourn of Servetus at Geneva, and the tragical issue which closed it, should be connected with the *tout-ensemble* of his life, as this, again, should be traced to the general idea of which it was the manifestation. Here we have sought to exhibit only the Genevese side of the subject, elsewhere we shall endeavour to present the whole, submitting in detail the characteristic traits of the life and opinions of Servetus, along with a general view of the connection between the Reformation and heresy. The present work will then be reproduced with certain modifications, so as to complete the undertaking."

have been the object of Calvin's refutations in his *Declaration*. One might also regard as true the facts which are not contradicted by Calvin, published in a book entitled: "Contra libellum Calvini quo ostendere conatur hæreticos jure gladii coërcendos esse," printed first in 1554, and reproduced in Holland 1612, in 8vo. After having at first appeared apart, that little work was reproduced by Alwoerden and Mosheim in their biographies of Servetus. [We are to be careful how far we receive statements as true, merely because Calvin did not contradict them.—Tr.]

B—Pages 97, 100.

We subjoin a Verbatim Copy of the Indictment against Servetus, as lodged by N. de la Fontaine, omitting only the references to the Books of Servetus, or other documents, on which the charges are founded.

Plainte portée par Nicolas de la Fontaine contre Servet, et rédigée par Calvin.

Propose Nycolas de la Fontaine, lequel sest faict partie contre Michel Servet et pour ceste cause sest constitué prisonnier en cause criminelle.

1. I. En premier lieu quil y a environ vingt quatre ans quil a commencé à troubler les Eglises d'Allemagne par ses erreurs et hérésies et a esté condamné et sest rendu fuytif pour évader la punition qui luy estoit aprestée;

2. II. Item que de ce temps là ou environ il a imprimé ung livre exécrable lequel a infecté beaucoup de gens;

3. III. Item que depuis il na cessé par tous moiens quil a peu de semer son poison tant aux cottations quil a faict sur la Bible comme en quelques annotations quil a faictes sur Ptolomée;

4. IV. Item que depuis il a imprimé en cachette ung autre livre contennant des blasphèmes infinis;

5. V. Item questant détenu prisonier en la ville de Vienne, quant il vit quon ne le vouloit recevoir à gráce de se desdire il trouva le moyen deschapper de la prison.

VI. Requiert ledict Nycolas que ledict Servet soyt examiné sur tous les poincts.

VII. Et pource quil pourroit tergiverser prétendant que ses blasphémes et hérésies ne sont que bonne doctrine, ledict Nycolas propose certains articles sur lesquels il demande ledict héréticque estre examiné.

6. VIII. Ascavoir sil na pas escript et dogmatisé et publié que de croire quen une seulle essence de Dieu il y a trois personnes distinctes, le Père, le Fils, et le Sainct Esperit, cest forger quatre fantosmes qui ne se peuvent et ne se doibvent imaginer.

7. IX. Item que de mettre telle distinction en l'essence de Dieu c'est faire ung Dieu party en trois et que cela est ung diable à trois testes comme le Cerberus que les Poetes anciens ont appellé le chien denfer, ung monstre, et telles injures semblables.

8. X. Item sil ne maintient poinct tels blasphèmes avecques grandes injures tant contre les docteurs anciens comme sainct Ambroise, sainct Augustin, Chrisostome, Athanase, et leurs semblables, comme contre tous ceulx qui ont taché de nostre temps de remetre la chrestienté au dessus, jusques à nommer Melanchton homme sans foy, fils du Diable, Bélial et Sathan.

9. XI. Item sil ne dict pas que nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ nest poinct fils de Dieu sinon en tant quil a esté conçu du Sainct Esperit, au ventre de la Vierge Marie.

10. XII. Item que ceulx qui croyent que Iesus Christ ayt esté la parolle de Dieu le père engendrée de tout éternité, ont seullement une rédemption fantastique et de sorciers.

11. XIII. Item que Iesus Christ est Dieu en tant que Dieu a faict quil fust tel.

12. XIV. Item que la chair de Iesus Christ est venue du ciel et de la substance de Dieu.

13. XV. Item que la Déité a esté seullement communiquée à Iesus Christ quant il a esté faict homme et depuis spirituellement communiquée aux apostres au jour de la Penthecoste.

14. XVI. Item quant il est dit que Iesus Christ est dune mesme essence avecques son père, cest à dire quen cest homme Iesus Christ il y a une mesme déité, puissance et

volonté avecques Dieu et non pas que la parolle de Dieu réside et subsiste en son essence.

15. XVII. Item sil ne condamne poinct ceulx qui cherchent en lessence de Dieu son sainct esperit disant que tous ceulx qui croyent la Trinité sont athéistes.

16. XVIII. Item tous ceulx qui croyent quelque distinction de propriété en lessence de Dieu dissipent sa nature et la mettent par pièces.

17. XIX. Item que la parolle de Dieu nest autre chose que la chair de Iesus Christ.

18. XX. Item que la chair de Iesus Christ a esté engendrée de la substance de Dieu par une parolle quil appelle sesminalle.

19. XXI. Item que lessence de la chair et de lâme de Iesus Christ est la déité de ceste parolle et du souffle que Dieu a mis hors.

20. XXII. Item que si Iesus Christ estoit fils de Dieu sinon à cause de son humanité pour ce quelle est engendrée de la substance de Dieu, quil ne seroit poinct vrayment mort. Car sil est mort il nest plus fils de Dieu.

21. XXIII. Item quant sainct Iehan dict que la parolle estoit en Dieu, cest à dire que cest homme Iesus Christ y estoit.

22. XXIV. Item que lessence des anges et de nos ames est de la substance de Dieu.

23. XXV. Item que la substance de Iesus Christ est celle qui estoit en la nuée et que cest la mesme substance de laquelle les anges et nos ames procèdent.

24. XXVI. Item au lieu de confesser trois personnes en lessence de Dieu ou trois hypostases qui ayent chacune sa propriété, il dict que Dieu est une seulle chose contenant cent mil essences, tellement quil est une portion de nous, et que nous sommes une portion de son esperit.

25. XXVII. Item suyvant cela que non seullement les patrons de toutes créatures sont en Dieu, mais aussi les

formes essentielles, tellement que nos ames sont de la semence substanciale de la parolle de Dieu.

26. XXVIII. Item que Iesus Christ est le fils de Dieu pour ce quil a trois élémens de la substance du père ascavoir le feu, lair et leau.

27. XXIX. Item que lame de lhomme est mortelle et quil n'ya qung souffle élémentaire qui soyt immortel qui est la substance que Iesus Christ a maintenant au ciel et qui est aussi la substance élémentaire et divine et incorruptible du sainct esperit.

28. XXX. Item que jamais les Pères soubz la loy nont receu lesperit de régénération.

29. XXXI. Item que lame de lhomme a esté faicte mortelle après le péché dAdam comme le corps.

30. XXXII. Item que les petits enfans nont poinct de péché et pourtant quils nont que faire de rédemption jusques à ce quils soyent venus en aige.

31. XXXIII. Item quon ne commet poinct péché mortel jusques en laige de vingt ans.

32. XXXIV. Item que le Batesme des petits enfans est une invention diabolique, une faulseté infernalle pour destruire toute la chrestienté.

33. XXXV. Item que la parolle de Dieu nest plus telle quelle estoit devant l'incarnation de Iesus Christ, pource que la substance dicelle estoit la clarté de la nuée et que maintenant elle est faicte chair.

34. XXXVI. Item combien quil confesse que les philosophes ayent erré en disant que le monde estoit le grant Dieu, il dict que Iesus Christ en tant quil est homme estoit tousjours en Dieu et que de luy est la déité du monde.

35. XXXVII. Item que lair est lesperit de Dieu et que Dieu est nommé esperit pource quil vivifie toutes choses par son esperit dair.

36. XXXVIII. Item que lame de lhomme en tant quelle a beaucoup de propriétés divines est plaine de dieux infinis.

37. XXXIX. Item quen la personne de Mons. Calvyn, ministre de la parolle de Dieu en ceste Eglise de Geneve, il a difamé par livre imprimé la doctrine que s'i presche prononçant toutes les injures et blasphèmes quil est possible dinventer.

38. XL. Et pource quil scavoit bien que son dict livre ne pourroit estre souffert mesme entre les Papistes à cause quil destruict tous les fondements de la chrestienté quil sest caché de Guillaume Guérou pour lors correcteur de limprimerie, comme ledict Guérou la déclairé.

39. Requiert ledict Nycolas que ledict Servet soit contrainct de respondre sur le faict des articles icy proposés, sans entrer en dispute si la doctrine est vraye ou non, pource que cela se vuydera puys après."

C—Pages 121, 124.

The following are some Extracts from the Letter of Balthazar Arnoullet, referred to at the pages indicated above, and may suffice to show that the intimacy of Servetus and Geroult was close, though the former altogether disclaimed it.

A Sire Jaques Bertet, demeurant à Chastillon.

Jaques, jay receu vos lettres par le présent porteur datées du 12e juillet. Et pour responce en icelles : je suis joyeux que je treuve nestre veritable ce que Symon du Bosc mavoit escrit de vous que aviez declaré que aviez un toneau à Francfort de ces livres (la *Christianismi Restitutio*). . . . . Et ne suis encor du tout sailly de mon procès (celui où il était engagé à Vienne comme imprimeur du livre de Servet), car il faillu faire encor hier ma purgation par six gens de bien de nos voysins sur ma prudhomie pour estre absoulz dedans la sepmaine prochaine qui sera

ma totalle delivrance (des prisons de Vienne où il était détenu) et mest plus besoin destre plus homme de bien que Guéroult et meilleure conscience, car les bons amys que jay et ay tousjours eu ne ce fusse meslé en mes affaires.

* * * * *

Quant à ce que Guéroult et du Bosc disent que je leur faitz tort, cest totallement au contraire, car ils ont eu tousjours deux foys plus du mien que nay eu du leur. Et pour recompence davoir nourry la femme de Guéroult trois ans entiers, et luy entretenu comme ma personne en notre maison en luy baillant guages pour faire ce que jeusse fait faire à dapprentifs en la correction qui en ont plus aprins en un an quil nen a aprins en troys ans, il ma villainement trahy, car il a corrigé le livre (la *Christianismi Restitutio*) tout du long et ne me déclara jamais les erreurs. Que comme me fiant à luy je demandoys sil estoit selon Dieu (c'est-à-dire s'il était selon les principes de la foi réformée) il me disoit que ouy, mais que il parloit en quelques epistres à Mons.r Cal. (Calvin) et quil (Guéroult) avoit bonne envie de le traduyre en François ; mais je luy dis que si lautheur nestoit contant (n'y consentait) quil s'en gardast bien, ce que lautheur ne voulust permettre ne quil en prist un. Il a dit beaucoup de mal de M.r Cal. en bonnes compagnies (ce qui prouve, comme nous l'avons dit, que Guéroult appartenait au parti anticalviniste), et mesmes il me raporta à son dernier voyage quil luy parla et quil luy avoit dit de moy quil navoit fait que son devoir de me faire apréhender (s'agit-il ici de l'arrestation d'Arnoullet à Vienne sur la dénonciation de de Trie?) et que je passoye par dela (Genéve) sans laller voir (lui Calvin). La vérité est telle que je pensoye quil ne meust en telle amytié comme il ma eu par le passé (ce qui prouve qu'Arnoullet appartenait secrétement aux réformés Français) pour avoir tenu un tel monstre (Servet) lequel Dieu veuille adviser. . . . . En ce temps (pendant l'impression de la *Christianismi Restitutio*)

il (Guéroult) avoit la charge de la maison et correction et nestoye pour la troisiéme partie du temps en la maison, car il saccordoit avec lautheur de sorte quil ne (me) déclara jamais rien sinon après que fustes party pour aller à Francfort (où Bertet portait comme libraire, entre autres livres, ceux qu'imprimait Arnoullet, ce qui lui donna l'occasion de prendre connaissance de la *Christianismi Restitutio*), et ne fust que par le moyen que men parlastes si affectueusement dudit livre, ne leusse tant tenté à luy faire dire vérité, encor pas la moytié, ne me dit. . . . . Quant à ce que me mandez que je prenne un homme pour aller à Francfort (afin de faire disparaître les exemplaires de la *Christianismi Restitutio* qui s'y trouvaient) vous devez entendre que je nay pas délibéré en pendre un autre que vous. . . . . Je vous conseille de faire perdre secrettement les livres (lesdits exemplaires) et quil ne sen treuve jamais fueillet ny demy. Et que ce soit sans que soyez en ce scandalisé car il me gréve bien que soyons ainsi déceuz et trompés en tel affaire (entre Bertet et Arnoullet existait probablement une association pour le commerce de librairie). Mais Dieu notre pére nous garde encor assez de biens et beaucoup plus que naurons destruy. . . . Quant à ce que me mandez que je scavoys bien que lautheur estoit rejetté des Eglises Chrétiennes (réformées) et que sur partie lavarice ma meu à ce faire (à imprimer la *Christianismi Restitutio*), je vous prie ne mavoir en telle estime ou vous seriez loing de ma congnoissance et vous suffise que je vous escritz cy dessus la vérité.

* * * * *

D—Page 150.

Double de la sentence criminelle jettée à Vienne contre Michel Servet et exécutée en effigie.

Entre le procureur du Roy daulphin demandeur en crime

dhérésie scandaleuse dogmatisation composition de nouvelles doctrines et livres hérétiques sédition schisme et perturbation de lunion et repoz publicques rebellion et désobéissance aux ordonnances faictes contre les hérésies effraction et évasion des prisons royalles delphinales dune part, et maitre Michel de Villeneufve médecin par cy devant prisonnier aux prisons du pallaix delphinal de Vienne et à présent fugitif accusé desdits crimes daultre.

Veu par nous les pièces iustificatives desdictes hérésies, mesmes les epistres et escriptures de la main dudict Villeneufve adressées à M.e Iehan Calvin prescheur de Genève, et par ledict de Villeneufve recogneues, ses réponces, confessions et négations; les réponces et aultres procédures concernantz Balthazard Arnollet imprimeur; certaines basles et livres imprimez desquelz lintitulation est *Christianismi Restitutio;* les tesmoings examinez sus ce que ledict de Villeneufve avoit composé et faict imprimer ledict livre à sez despens; les rapportz des docteurs en théologie et aultres personnes notables sur les erreurs contenuz audict livre et epistres, et lesquelz erreurs et hérésies sont dailleurs manifestes par la lecture dyceux; actes faictes sur lévation des prisons et diligences de apréhender ledict Villeneufve; adiournemens à troys briefz iours et défautz sur iceux obtenuz; recollemens des tesmoings, conclusions diffinitives dudict procureur du Roy daulphin; et tout ce qui a esté remys par devers nous: Le tout considéré nous avons dict et disons lesdictz défautz avoir esté bien et deuement obtenuz. Pour le proffit desquelz nous avons forcloz et forcluons ledict de Villeneufve de toutes exceptions et défences, déclairé et déclairons atteint et convaincu des cas et crimes à luy imposez: pour repression des quelz nous lavons condamné et condamnons, assavoir, pour le regard de lamende pécuniaire en la somme de mille livres tournois damende envers le Roy daulphin, et à estre, incontinent quil sera apréhendé, conduyt sur ung tumbereau avec ses

livres à jour et heure de marché, dès la porte du pallaix delphinal par les carrephours et lieux accoustumés iusques au lieu de la hale de la présente cité et subsequemment en la place appelée du Charneve, et illec estre brulé tout vifz à petit feu, tellement que son corps soit mys en cendre. Cependant sera la présente sentence exécutée en effigie avecques laquelle seront sesdictz livres bruslés, et si, lavons condemné et condemnons ès despens et frais de iustice des quels nous réservons la taxe, déclairans tous et chacuns ses biens acquys et confisqués au proffit de qui apartiendra, lesdictz frays de iustice et amende sur iceux biens au préalable livrez et payez. De la Court vybailly et iuge delphinal, Grater, assesseur, Carier, assesseur, Putod, assesseur, Duprat, assesseur, Adebart, assesseur, Beraud, assesseur, Phi. Neret, assesseur, Temptesieu Passard, assesseur, Bertier, assesseur, P. le Court, assesseur, Loys Morel, assesseur, Christofle, assesseur. Publiée ladicte sentence en plein iugement à laudiance audict procureur du Roy daulphin. Nous vybailly et juge susdicts séans dans lauditoire du pallaix delphinal de Vienne, le dixseptiesme jour du moys de juing lan mil cinq cens cinquante troys. Présens à ce M.es Philibert Gollin, Alexandre Roland, Claude Magnin, Charles Verdonez, Pierre des Vignes et plusieurs autres praticiens de Vienne illec estans et moy greffier soubsigné Chasalis.

Dudict jour envyron lheure de mydy après que leffigie dudict Villeneufve avoit esté faicte au devant dudict pallaix delphinal: icelle effigie par Franç. Berodi exécuteur de la haulte iustice, lequel lon a envoyé quérir à ces fins, a esté mise sur ung tumbereau avec cinq basles des livres composez par icelluy Villeneufve, et après ledict tumbereau chargé desdicts effigie et livres a esté conduit et mené par ledict exécuteur dès la porte dudict pallaix par les carrefours et lieux accoustumés iusques au lieu de la hale de la présente cité de Vienne, et subséquemment en la place ap-

pelée la Charneve, en laquelle ladicte effigie a esté attachée à une potence expressément erigée, et après bruslée avec lesdicts livres à petit feu par ledict exécuteur, lequel a mys à dheue et entière exécution ladicte sentence pour le regard de ladicte effigie sellon sa forme et teneur en présence de Guigues Ambrosin, crieur et trompette de Vienne, Claude Reymet, Michel Basset sergent royaulx delphinaux, Sermet des Chams bolungier de Vienne, et de plusieurs aultres gens illec assemblez pour veoir faire ladicte exécution. Ainsin a esté procédé, et par moy greffier soubnomme receu Chasalis.—Extrait des registres de la Court du baillaige de Vienne par moy greffier soubsigné Chasalis.

E.—Page 188; F.—Page 198.

Lettres circulaires adressées, à l'occasion du procès de Servet, par le Conseil de Genève, aux Eglises et Conseils des Cantons Protestants, avec les réponses des gouvernements de Zurich et de Berne.

I.

Aux spectables, scavans et honorez Seigneurs ministres de la Parolle Dieu en l'Eglise de . . . . . , nos bien bons et singuliers amys.

Spectables scavans et honorés Seigneurs, nous nous recommandons bien à vostre bonne grâce.

Spectables Seigneurs Bien seurs et certains que vous persistez tousjours en ceste bonne et saincte volunté davancer et maintenir la parolle de Dieu, nous avons pensé que vous ferions bien tort, si nous cèlions ce que parmy ces iours avons trouvé : cest quil y a ung homme en noz prisons nommé Michiel Servetus qui sest ingéré à composer, escripre et faire imprimer des livres sus la Saincte Escripture contenans grands et infinys passaiges que prétendons nestre recepvables selon Dieu et la saincte doctrine évangélique.

Lequel est esté ouy par nos ministres, et auquel pourtant sont esté formés des articles esquels il a répondu, et à ses responces est esté replicqué; il a encore replicqué luy, comment le tout est redigé par escript, lequel pour lhonneur de Dieu, nous vous prions il vous plaise veoir, puys rendre à nostre présent messagier avec vostre bon advys. Vous prions aussi de vouloir veoir lung de ses livres quavons baillé au présent porteur, pour vous communiquer, affin puissiez cognoistre que à bonne cause nous vouldrions réprimer ses maulvais propos. Et du tout nous en rescripre vostre dit bon advys, lequel désirons grandement sans touteffois nous deffier aulcunement de noz ministres. Vous nous obligerez tousiours plus oultre à prier Dieu il lui plaise vous augmenter en ses sainctes grâces. De Genève ce 21 Septembre 1553.

Les Syndiques et Conseil de Genève
Vos bien bons et grans amys.

II.

Aux magnifficques, puissans et très redoubtez Seigneurs, les Seigneurs Bourguemaistre (ou advoyer) *et Conseil de . . . . . , nos bien bons voysins, trèschers, singuliers et trèshonorés amys.*

Magnifficques, Puissans et très redoubtez Seigneurs nous nous recommandons bien fort à vostre bonne grâce.

Magnifficques Seigneurs ! Nous ne scavons si voz Seigneuries ont entendu que nous avons ung prisonnier, qui se nomme Michael Servetus, qui a composé, escript et faict imprimer ung livre contenant beaucoub de choses contre nostre religion. Que nous avons faict veoir à noz Ministres mais combien que ne nous defions aucunement dyceux noz Ministres, nous desirons encore le communiquer à ceux de vostre ville sil vous plait, ensemble ses responces, et ce sus quoy il a respondu. Et pour ce leur en avons escript, nous vous prions doncque bien affectueusement quil vous plaise les vouloir induire à vouloir le tout veoir, et nous en rescri-

pre leur bon advys, affin nous puissions la chose selon son debvoir terminer. A tant nous prierons Dieu il luy plaise vous augmenter en prospérité destat. De Genève ce 21 de Septembre 1553.

Vos bien bons voysins tous prest et grans amys
Les Syndiques et Conseil de Genève.

III.

TRADUCTION.

Aux prodhoms, prouvables, honorables et saiges les Sindicques et Conseil de Genève, nos singuliers, bien aymez et bons amys.

Notre aimable et voluntaire service avec tous les honneurs amour et amitié à nous possibles prémys, Prodhoms, prouvables, honorables et saiges singuliers bien aymez et bons amys, sus vostre escripre et requeste et ce quavez envoyé par deça le livre publié par votre prisonnier Michel Servet, nous avons toute la procédure délivré à noz scavans et Ministres de notre Eglise lesquelles nespargnantz aulcunement leur singulière obligence ont veu lescripre dudict Servet tant que la peu porter le temps et sus cela rédigé par escript leur advys et confession comme le verrez ycy auprès, en bonne confiance que vous recevrés linformation des nostres à singulier contentement et plaisir et ne laisseres venir en avant la meschante et faulse intention de votre dict prisonnier, laquelle est toutallement contraire à la religion Chrestienne, et laquelle donne de grandz scandalles et assaulz, ains aurez aggréable et vous plaira linformation de noz scavans et leur confession de notre saincte religion Chrestienne, et si à ladvenir en tels advenemens vous aviez besoing du conseil et advis des nostres trouverez iceulx et nous aussi en tous temps tres voluntaires, car nous sommes tous inclins et voluntaires à ladvancement de tout ce qui pourra servir à labolissement de faulses errales doctrines et opinions et à ladvancement de

lhonneur de Dieu et de sa saincte parolle. Donné Lundy second doctobre 1553.

Burgemaistre et Conseil de la ville de Zurich.

IV.

ORIGINAL.

Aux nobles, magnifiques Seigneurs, les Sindicques et Conseil de Genefve, nous singuliers amys, trèschiers et feaulx combourgeois.

Nobles magnifficques Sgrs., singuliers amys très chiers et feaulx combourgeoys nous avons receuz vous lectres datées XXI^e^ de Septembre touchant Michiel Servetus et ayant veuz et bien entenduz le contenuz dicelles, incontinent comme desirrez ordonné à nous ministres icy de veoir le livre et les responces dudict Servetus et après vous en escripre leur bon advis et opinions. Ce quil ont faict comme entendres par leur lectres que vous escripvent. Vous prions comme ne doubtons point à ce estre enclins de tousiours tenir main que les erreurs et sectes comme lesdict sont ou semblables ne soyent semées en lesglise de Iesu Christ nostre seul Saulveur et par ce garder de trouble et adversité, et sa gloire avancer et augmenter. Datum VI Octobris 1553.

Ladvoyer et Conseil de Berne.

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